

THE ADVENTURES IN MODERN MUSIC

WIRE

ISSUE 185 MARCH 2000 £3.10

Rashied Ali
rhythms of the
spheres

**Richard
H Kirk**
electronic
revolutionary

**Vladislav
Delay**

Haco

**Kimmo
Pohjonen**

**Bill
Laswell's**
jukebox

Plus
Moondog
The Residents
Coil, Magma
La Monte Young

WIRE

SPANNER IN THE WORKS



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your monthly exploration of new music

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The Third Eye Foundation

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WIRE

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editor's idea

The first time I heard about Wire — the group, that is, not this magazine — was at some point in the mid-80s, long after they had released the three EPs LPs for which they are still best remembered. It was via a live review in the *New Musical Express*, which was actually quite well respected at the time, describing a gig at Oxford's Museum of Modern Art for which the group had briefly reformed. I can't recall all the details, but I remember the description of their stripped back line-up: Robert Gottlob's sole use of snare and floor tom and the performance-art antics of Bruce Gilbert and Graham Lewis (something to do with a step ladder, hammer-and-nails etc), all of which carried an intriguing air of cultural exoticism. I was still attending school at that point, leaving the experience with a huge musical intake, but as yet nothing had blown me in the direction of this mysterious sounding outfit and for one reason or another it was to be a while before I followed through on this scrap of information to my shame, it wasn't until I read Ian Penman's magnificent profile of the group, which appears on page 26 of this month's issue, that I actually went and shelved out for copies of *Chaos Missing* (754 and The DnD).

Anyway, it's by pure, yet lucky coincidence that my first issue as Editor features Wire on the cover, as well as a report (in the Multimedia section) on an exhibition of sound installations taking place at, yup, Oxford's MoMA gallery. Back in the mid-80s, art's interface with rock scored few column inches in the music press, but the connections inherent within Wire, the group, have held fast, perhaps even to make more sense in the present. Now, there exists a magazine for this interface — the one you're holding in your hands. From jazz and improvised roots, the enormous imaginative and technological leaps that have informed almost all areas of creative music over the past decade have given us one hell of a ride as we've tried to stay abreast of them while on all sides people keep declaring that music is in crisis.

'Art music' used to be the term given to modernist

composition, as opposed to rock 'n' roll. Nowadays, however, you could make a reasonable case for classifying all the sounds featured in *The Wire* as art music. Music that illuminates, enriches, confuses, enraptures, invents, reveals untold stories, defies the imagination and boggles the ears... The one thing it all has in common is that its least priority is the selling of itself (although the point is that it is selling, and to increasing amounts of eager listeners). Whether it's music of emotional depth and/or intellectual profundity, or the sound and noise of downright glorious stupidity (as opposed to stupidity: take that up with Biba Kopli), the one thing it's not there for is to tweak profit margins for accountants whose idea of sweet music is the squeaking of company car leatherette.

For the past months, since various personnel shifts here were announced, I've had all sorts of folks on the phone saying, 'So it's all change, then, is it?' The answer every time has been, 'No'. As one of very few music magazines anywhere in the world whose constituency is steadily increasing, it will be business as usual. What's more, *The Wire* is currently at a point where it is straining at the very notion of what a magazine is or can be. Far from solely a journalistic endeavour, we find ourselves in the very midst of a large amount of musical activity, programming and curating events (our interference collaboration with London's Lux Centre, for instance, restarts in April — see Out There) and developing a Website which will be substantially revised and expanded in the next few months, and which will act as a central information and contact hub for our distributed musical network, as well as providing an in depth companion to the print magazine and a welcoming 'front door' for new and regular readers alike. Then there is our ongoing series of exclusive Wire Tapper compilation CDs, the fifth volume of which is given away free with this month's issue to all our subscribers. At this rate, it will only be a matter of time before we're purchasing our own football team.

ROB YOUNG

**The April issue of The Wire will be on sale on
Tuesday 28 March**

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letters

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Motörhead madness

Thank you for Lemmy's *Invisible Jukebox* (*The Wire* 1992). It was the funniest for a long time. The magazine is a great read as well as a pointer to potential listening experiences, but you really need more stuff that makes readers want to laugh out loud – more humour, less po-facedness.

Gary Saunders *Selkirk*

Concerning Lemmy: the song "Riding With The Driver" relates to steam trains, not motorbikes. This was also the original title of the Motorhead album *Orgasmatron*, which is why the cover shows a speeding train rather than Woody Allen in a cupboard.

I must remember not to invite Lemmy round to my house to listen to records. His appearance on Radio 1's *Friday Rock Show* as a guest DJ several years ago had some interesting moments.

Martin Young *Connaught*



Pick of the month: Lemmy

A pair of Hams

In his review (*The Wire* 1992) of Peter Hammill's recently revised second version of *The Fall Of The House Of Usher*, Andy Hamilton says "In a way, it's surprising it's taken him [Hammill] this long to find a kindred spirit in Rodrick Usher." Yet, as every Hammill aficionado knows, Hammill began work on this opera as long ago as 1973 (the libretto by Chris Judge Smith already written, replacing the version in 1991 on the Some Bizzare label). Moreover, Hamilton neglects to mention the importance of this work in Hammill's sizeable oeuvre: described by the composer in *Rodrickbeck 29* as "pivotal in my development simultaneously a text-bed and an open canvas on which I could experiment in private – even while I was continuing to do so in public." So *The Fall Of The House Of Usher* has been something of an obsession for Hammill over three decades. Prospective listeners should bear this in mind when approaching this demanding and atmospheric work.

Chris Blackford *via e-mail*

Stay as you are

I thought I would drop you a line in response to the letter from Magalhães (*The Wire* 1992). Whilst I appreciate Magalhães's mention/attempt to help you

win/win the magazine, I feel that you have a fine balance as things are: featuring both artists from jazz/world music/experimental and "Melody Maker note-haric/pseudo-cool bands". If it weren't for your features on such pseudo-cool acts as Alec Empire (long before NME picked up on him or ATR, I might add), Patricia Mc Eneaney, Speedcrunch, Jansky Noise, Pan Sonic, et al, I probably wouldn't have taken out a subscription with you. The reason I did is precisely because you DO feature artists that aren't covered in other publications whilst also informing me of artists that I wouldn't necessarily have known of. I agree with him/her in that your coverage of artists is open-minded and boundless. However, would he/she prefer if you didn't feature artists such as DJ Scud because they may have been in *WME/Melody Maker* and not on the strength of the music that they create? Doesn't it say on the cover "Adventures in MODERN Music"? As far as I'm concerned, if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Martin Roberts *via e-mail*

Diamanda is forever

Berg Greek plus a fanatic of Diamanda Galas. I was more than agitated to see her image printed on *The Wire*'s front cover (190/191). I always considered her sort of an outcast, an artist on whom most of the maps had raised a secret embargo. Thanks, Lord, there are

some people like you that have some brains. I've been following Galas's discography in total excitement since *Litanies* and I have read and translated tons of articles and interviews with her from Greek to English.

Whoever reads even a single Galas interview will automatically understand that her personality is parallel to her artistic contribution to today's disputed term "music". A real artist. And to me she is more Greek than lots of Greeks around here, because she has the strength of an ancient Greek goddess: being a constant fighter and living for today without forgetting the past. This is her "saltsman". This is her "witchcraft".

Finally, I find it hard not to praise your photographer Tim Kent for his GREAT job. As an amateur photographer I always dreamt of photographing DG and, believe me, Tim Kent's photos are the ones I always wanted to take. They allow you to have a full view of the Dyo's grace.

Konstantinos Dages *Athens, Greece*

I like Diamanda's music. It's good. She can do many noteworthy things with her voice. However, I am not convinced by Ian Penman's effort to portray her as some sort of scholar. I first began to worry when she claimed that the Turkish government in the course of virginity inspections, effectively rapes Turkish girls in the name of religion. Since Ataturk's establishment of the secular Turkish Republic in 1927, human rights abuses in Turkey have been motivated by the government's campaign to suppress religion, not to impose it. How could someone who, as she describes it, studied the "interface of biochemistry-neurochemistry-biology" at Scripps Research Center in La Jolla commit such an error? Surely she had to take some political science courses for breadth in addition to her area of specialty. The answer is that there is no such specialty. Scripps is an oceanographic institute, where they may occasionally dabble in cephalopod neurochemistry, but where their primary interests concern such things as currents and submarine volcanism. As an academic, I know all too well that such vulgar credentials don't mean much even when they're authentic. There's certainly no reason to make them up, especially when writing about an artist whose soulful music is in so little need of buttressing through institutional affiliation.

Justin Smith *Department of Philosophy, Columbia University, New York, USA*

Loved the photos of Diamanda Galas. Looking forward to an English version of the article to go with them.

Peter Quail *Birmingham*

YO LA TENGO

And then nothing
turned itself inside
-out

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Sliding scales

In response to Rob Young's feature *Worship The Glitch* (*Undercurrents*, The Wire 190/191) I feel compelled to set the record straight for Wire readers.

A key aspect of the Buchla Modular Synth used by Morton Subotnick in the late 1960s was that it had no conventional keyboard. Instead pressure sensitive touch planes could be assigned to trigger specific pitches and/or control loudness, brightness, modulation or sliding between pitches. It was this unusual and expressive interface which allowed Subotnick to create such uniquely alien articulations and gestures.

Also I think it can be misleading to associate the creation of certain synth designs too closely with the artistic intentions of prospective users. Synths are by nature open-ended tools. Most can sound as polite or as vicious as the player/programmer intends. The Clavia Nord Lead when it arrived in 1995 was technically at a new peak of high res for a totally monophonic based machine. Its processor chip outputs numbers so fast that audible steps between digital values were inaudible, giving it a smooth analogue feel which appealed to the retro market for vintage Moog type synths. However, Autechre and Zoviet France have found that the Nord also excels at generating granular rising sounds and ultra-sharp spiky clicks, thuds, clacks, cracks etc when deployed at very low frequencies, which it produces with less loss in volume and clarity than most previous designs.

OK, I admit I'm an avid synthesist, but for me the most fascinating aspects of the music mentioned rise out of the way the artists have been inspired by their synths to create their own language of sounds and gestures. Too much electronics gets obscured by an overly conceptual and poetic assessment. Let's have a bit more descriptive evocation.

Tom Cullis *Hydrantshire*

Choppers over Belfast

As an addendum to Ken Hill's excellent feature on helicopters (*The Wire* 190/191) the same machinery has been used for surveillance and transportation purposes by the army in Northern Ireland for the past 30 years. Their familiar whump-whump sound in the skies overhead (a metal machine music?) became like the wailing police fire engine/ambulance siren (ideologically referred to as the national anthem) once manifestation of Russia's *Imperialism*.

While many documentary makers reinforced the national stereotype by tacking on the ad hoc whump whump of Uilleann pipes, the reality was that machines provided the rhythms and melodies to Belfast's aural soundtrack during the period referred to as 'the Troubles'. The helicopters are less apparent now that we have a fragile peace, but they've been replaced by the sounds of other machinery, cranes and forklifts involved in the reconstruction and regeneration of the city. Not an Uilleann pipe within earshot.

It's little surprise, then, that the sound of the helicopter

has been incorporated into the recordings of *Black Box* (ex-cans) Local group The Dringo Babes combined the helicopter sound and the dialogue sample, "Some day this war's gonna end" (from *Apocalypse Now*) into their pop single "Small Town" (1988). Delocating the futility of conventional warfare in South East Asia to Europe and welding it to a glorious chorus that commented on religious intolerance and political small-mindedness in Ulster's small towns, it's one of Northern Ireland's last pop classics. Secondly, local sound architects Technology gave us *Whirlwind* (1992), an entire album of helicopters patrolling the skies over Belfast, the original sound treated with a battery of effects like I'm making an assumption here) ring modulation. It sweeps some musically back into the original helicopter sounds and sits fairly closely to the ideas pursued in Stockhausen's almost contemporaneous (but better known) *Helicopter-Streichorchester* (although Technology lease music from the rotors rather than use conventional instruments).

The helicopter, then, an extremely important tool in the sonic armoury of Belfast's music makers over the past decade.

Tom Gilmore *Belfast*

Road Lesh travelled

I thoroughly enjoyed Edwyn Pouncey's review of The Grateful Dead's *So Many Roads* box set. His assessment that the latter-day material is somewhat inconsistent is right on the money, although I feel that this is partially due to the way the set was compiled, as they played many excellent shows through the 90s. One small quibble: "Box Of Rain" is a Lesh-Hunter composition not a Garcia-Hunter tune.

Luis Torregrossa *Perinton, NY, USA*

Mulch ado

Ben Watson does a great disservice to the DJ Speedcrank's Jansky Noise CD both figuratively and literally if his review is to be believed (*Soundcheck*, The Wire 190/191). The floppy disk given to the CD's sleeve may well contain Audiomulch software, but the program can also be found on the CD. Audiomulch is a great program and deserves mention in your Multimedia section (it already has been, but in *The Wire* 785 - 80). I think the packaging is a nice joke on the consumer.

One removes the well stuck on floppy only to find the software on the CD. Oh dear. Stick the floppy in a PC, use Explorer to view your CD-ROM drive, et voila.

Graeme Park *via e-mail*

Old fossils: you dig?

So, Peter Shapiro, how was it speaking to Mr Caetano EGO Veloso (in *Beleza*, Jukebox, The Wire 190/191)? Sure he's a good composer, and he made a great contribution to music history, but now he just occupies too much space. Brazilian music made him a kind of idol, an Apollo or Zeus perhaps, but the worst of all is that he actually believed that if he ever did something

anti-establishment, I don't remember that must have been far in the past. He and most of his mates are the establishment themselves, they are like gangsters, they don't let anything new appear, they are so patronising. Fortunately for us, since the 70s there have been many creative and lively musical acts: Fela's Pafie Band, De Fala and the well known Chico Science. Why not cover people who are experimenting now instead of egocentric old fossils?

Carlo Sansolo *London*

Faulty thinking

While your extensive coverage of free-minded music is highly commendable, there remains much that I find at fault with your magazine. For one, you indulge in indecorous self-promotion ("the best Goddamn music ever on the planet") and make immoderate display of insistent mercenaryness. This is most tangible in your aggressive endorsement of the fashionable non-mainstream (Tortoise, Scanner, Arto Lindsay, etc.) - an incessant on-air celebration of commonplaceness acclaimed as newsworthy and erudite. On the other hand, you systematically consign - if not castigate the true heralds of innovation and headway (less favoured and esteemed because more experimental, less popular) to abject obscurity. In a faint-hearted and ill-delivered attempt at reclaiming your avowed Weltanschauung, and clearly compensating for your mediocentric inclinations, you offer an annual, redemptive do-or-die face-off of albums (many of which are barely and imperfectly brought to the readers' attention) strike that vaguest of headings: outer limits. It can hardly strike one as unaccountable when the record ultimately voted in as the most persuasive of the year happens to be a popular/populist one (Ticky, Sonic Youth, Porthead).

Francisca Monsalve *Bangkok, Thailand*

Corrections

Issue 192: In *The Primer*, the photo of Gopal Krishnan on page 37 actually showed the South Indian vocalist of that name, not Gopal Krishnan the North Indian vichitra veena player. Meanwhile, on the same page, the photo captioned Ustad Mohiuddin Dagar was actually his brother Ustad Amrindran Dagar. Apologies for the confusion. On the Letters page, we accidentally attributed the item headed 'Cover charges' to the wrong correspondent; it was actually sent by Joseph Thang of Singapore. In the Jazz in Brief column in *Soundcheck*, The B Bold Souls CD on Thelma Houston given the wrong title. The record's real name is *Lost Ostin*. Ochre Records were omitted from the Label Directory. Their details are: Ochre, PO Box 155, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL51 0YS. E: ochre@btinternet.co.uk D: Craig. The WMO (Wire Mail Order) address was listed incorrectly. The correct details are: Wire Mail Order, PO Box 112, Stockport, Cheshire SK3 9FD. E: wiremail@lythoo.com W: wiremailorder.com. Issue 190/191: In *Bites* and the Directory, the Website of Werner Datschkecker's *Dunlop* label was printed wrongly. The correct URL is: www.wdunlop.at

Sound bank A

Contains the primary audio samples.
Different concentric rings contain different samples: drums – green, bass – blue, vocals – yellow, synth – red, riffs – grey.

Stop/Play button

Activates the playhead.

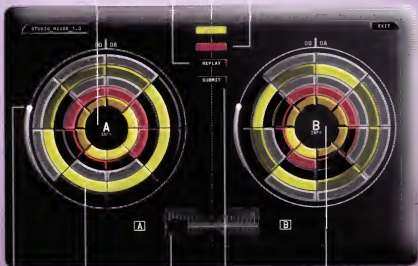
This mixer contains all the elements of a track by DJ Laurence Nelson. By activating the different audio samples, you can remix your own version.

Replay

Press this to replay your mix. When you're satisfied, submit it.

Record button

Press this to start recording your mix. The mixer records all your sample and fader moves.

**Playhead**

Circles the soundbanks like a radar screen trace. Plays the activated samples as it passes over them, moving in a clockwise direction.

Crossfade

Smooth volume fader to mix the two sound banks' output together. Works just like a crossfade on a set of decks.

Sound bank B

Contains secondary audio samples.

Audio sample

Click to activate the audio sample.
Click again to deactivate the sample.

Submit

Hit submit once you have recorded a mix. You'll be taken to the close your mix got to Laurence Nelson's definitive version.

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global ear

Easter Island

To get to Easter Island you must first fly to the Chilean capital of Santiago, and from there board another local flight to complete the journey. In between Santiago and Easter Island there is nothing but the Pacific Ocean to gaze down on for five hours until, almost unexpectedly, a cliff face is sighted and the plane touches down on the short airstrip that services this small and mysterious Polynesian island. Congratulations! You have now landed on the 'Navel of the World'.

More than 1500 years ago the inhabitants of Easter Island (or Rapa Nui as it was originally called) were split into two groups which historians call the Long Ears and the Short Ears. The Long Ears dominated the Short Ears, whom they forced to labour in the Rano Raraku stone quarry, hewing the giant stone figures (known as moai) from the side of a mountain and transporting them to their destined location on the shore. To move these enormous statues, they made wooden rollers by cutting down trees, but as they neglected to replant any, the island quickly became deforested. Eventually, as the order from the Long Ears to carve even larger stone figures intensified, the Short Ears rebelled against their oppressors and drove them into a flaming pit where the majority of them perished. They also toppled most of the statues (which represented the ancestors of the hated Long Ears) and devoured the cooked flesh of their enemies.

Today the inhabitants of the island are less aggressive, but they're fiercely proud of their history which stands in abundance all around them. The immediate feeling one gets as an outsider is of a place that has remained untouched since the dawn of time, where the horse is still a popular mode of transport, and there is not a mobile phone or a McDonald's in sight. But there is a Catholic church (amazingly, it has managed to incorporate elements of the original islanders' birdman

A survey of sounds from around the planet. This month . . .

cult into its decor), Coca Cola is a popular tittle and, surprisingly, there are two discotheques in town. That aside, the feeling that you are walking (almost floating) on another planet — especially when you reach the summit of a long dead volcano and look down, or up as the night sky explodes above your head — is hard to shake loose. The experience is (to quote Blue Oyster, Cult) akin to being "QDed on life itself".

The real trip, however, happened on New Year's Eve, when the population descended on a part of the island called Tahai to celebrate the imminent millennium, broadcast to the outside world by Chilean TV. Huddled on a volcanic rock-strewn hilltop and looking down at a stage that featured four spotlighted moai on their 'ahi' platform, the scene resembled a cross between Woodstock and the finale of *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*. The various performers who occasionally

regardless of safety, had been set off in the middle of the crowd. There were shades of Apocalypso Now as showers of brightly coloured flame rained down on the assembled throng, most of whom were too delirious on Chilean champagne to worry about getting burned. The increasingly infectious music of Matato'a continued to roll, while on the hillside a couple of musicians pumped away at accordions and softly sang as the celebration reached its peak. The contrast between the action 'on stage' and the folk singer's simple song was significant, yet it all blended together beautifully. As the last skyrocket burst into a gigantic supernova of green light it was time to visit the local disco.

Descoteque-Toroko was recommended as the place to go if we wanted to see how the locals really let their hair down. It was a garishly painted concrete hut with a corrugated iron roof which, when the music was turned all the way up, sounded from a distance like some gigantic beatbox. Inside, the scene was equally surreal, with wide-eyed tourists, T-shirted islanders (Bob Marley, Sepultura and Marilyn Manson designs being the most popular) and the occasional stray, body-painted dancer from the New Year's celebration, still in full ceremonial costume, all dancing or twirling along to a non-stop Techno music loop under UV lights. The beer was (for once) ice cold and the music was a lava hot flow of high energy, if largely indistinguishable dance tracks. Occasionally this constant beep, boost and beat would be replaced by a more subdued track from Matato'a's latest disc, and once again their more traditionally styled music, managed to catch hold, digging deep into the subconscious. If their extremely catchy song "Ite Ahi Ahi", with its Dyanthian harmonica opening, fell into the hands of some new, aspiring British DJ boxed with sampling the same old Chicago and Herbie Hancock breaks, methinks that he (and the group) could have a serious underground club hit on their hands. Matato'a rock!

Inside, Descoteque-Toroko was strange, but outside seemed much stranger as the sun came up over the age-old, sagdressed moai on the dawn of a new millennium. A cockle's chorus and the crash of breaking waves added to the muffled dance beat now dissolving into a hallucinatory Ambient thrash

IDWIN POUNCEY



shuffled into view with acoustic guitars hanging from their necks strained to be heard over the rather inadequate sound system, but suddenly everything snapped into place and a magical happening began. The main musical event was a performance by Matato'a, a group of traditional Rapa Nui musicians, singers and dancers. Parading in front of us wearing grass skirts and feathered headdresses, they proceeded to play selections from their latest CD, *Toroko*. The sound of Matato'a is a haunting mixture of ceremony and pop, where instruments like drums, ukulele, acoustic and electric guitars cohere around a beat that subliminally creeps into the memory and starts to gnaw at it.

By the time Y2K crept round, the place was exploding with a massive firework display that,

Easter Island's moai statues line up for the millennium. Above: the best little disco in Rapa Nui

PHOTO: CLAUDIO VESPA



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The free-out of free jazz saxophoneist Charles Gayle melds spontaneity and lyricism into an inseparable loveknot. "Ancestry of Days" displays Gayle's newest, richest, and most lyric work yet. With Hank Johnson, Justin Booth, and Michael Wimberly.



You see, he is laying down multi-directional rhythms all the time. To me he is definitely one of the greatest drummers," said John Coltrane about drummer Rashied Ali. Ali joins with Louis Belongers for "Rings of Saturn," a duo tribute to "Interstellar Space." Positive multidirectional mastery.



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bites



Vladislav Delay

Against the grain

"I'm quite a moody person and I like blue music," says Vladislav Delay, the enigmatic 23-year-old musician from Helsinki, and the latest prodigy from the Finnish capital to emerge after the trailblazing efforts of Sähkö's minimalist enclave. Yet Delay's grainy, mottled, rusted ambiances, which have so far emerged on the global electronic network's most dynamic underground labels, such as Sigma, Pinafo and Mile Plateaux, forsake the oscilloscope rigour of Sähkö's most extreme frequencies to produce some of the most melancholy-soaked, elastic tracks in electronic's continually reconfiguring canon. Meanwhile, last year's 12" beat bulletins on Chan Reaction and Thomas Brinkmann's Max Ernst label scaggled the nerve endings with their lengthy development and bated beats that loomed out of a haze like trees along a fog-shrouded road. On his two new full-length CDs he can be found reaching towards a thoroughly engrossing bombardment of the aural sense: his scattered micro-sounds swirl and eddy, bumping the ground like a discarded plastic bag, but they never disperse into the directionless drift of Ambient.

Sure enough, Delay claims a stronger affinity with jazz and improvised manoeuvres than with the vaporous cyber-pronouncements of Techno operatives. "I'm very much interested in the things that have happened within the electronic music scene in the past ten years," he says, adding pragmatically "but of course it's not electronic music that has shaped the world." Translated as a jazz drummer from the age of 14 — "Philly Joe Jones is still the man!" he exclaims — he plunged into an extensive study of percussion from a wide range of the world's musics, and he still claims his biggest influences are "reggae, dub and most of all Afro-American music: Cuban, African, Brazilian." Following stints in several groups, unsuccessfully attempting to fuse sampled beats with live instruments, a trip to New York and Jamaica convinced him to revise his methods radically.

"I spent a long time questioning things," he remembers, "altering states, selling my huge collection of percussion instruments, and buying some basic studio equipment and hoping for the best: to be able to concretise the musical ideas that had developed along the years." Somewhere around my earliest works I bought a turntable and started wasting my money on electronic music vinyls, trying to find the music I was looking for without getting it. Then I heard the sounds from Berlin and Cologne, and I was relieved to find that music after so many records I didn't like. To this day I really haven't found the music I really would like to listen to, instead of jazz or dub. I am into looping and manipulating elements and repetitions, but still it really has to have a musical meaning in it."

Although his music has been embraced by the minority factions championing the 'clicks and cuts' school of digital data abuse, Delay is at pains to distance himself from this most self-referential of

Vladislav Delay

approaches. He doesn't even own a sampler, and his methods depend far more on fortuitous accidents and curious lashings of the echo effect which shares his name. "It'll probably take a long time before I get myself a Mac computer," he says. "I've been working with the basic things you do with a PC: sequencing. My studio is very basic, and more or less broken, coming to an end, and I don't know what I'm going to do about it."

Here's hoping he leaves it to rot. The six tracks on *Entain*, a CD compiled by Mille Plateaux comprising two pieces from a previous release on the Dutch Sigma Editions, plus four other cuts, seem to creep like a lichen mold across the stereo space. Sound splurges colonize the tracks like patches of oxidation, speared by the occasional concentra of dub echo. Delay aims for spontaneity and organic arrangement rather than the arithmetic patterns of quantization. "If there's no improvisation or life in music it's very hard to get me interested in it," he states. "I also use randomness to a point where I'm still in control of it. The music I love is all about the moments of feelings meeting the skills and environment and the function these elements create. It's not very functional."

Delay is a part of a loose Helsinki collective known as Bassdrum, encompassing "music issues and stuff outside the music scene — design, art, fashion." There's due to be a swift turnover of Delay product in the coming months, with a whole collection of anonymous recordings and productions on the starting block, which he doesn't want named, and various European live appearances lined up for the spring. "How I feel about my music is like a fashion magazine, you put everything to create what is needed but when it's out, the next minute its gone."

"I more or less mirror my life through my music, so it's very personal and it goes where I go," he concludes. "Sometimes what I put into music goes beyond the blue." **ROB YOUNG** *Entain* is out now on Mille Plateaux. *Multia* is out now on Chan Reaction. Canoco's *Kemikok* EP is on Sigma. *Vladimir Delay* performs several UK dates this month: see Out There.

Tara Jane O'Neil

Louisville dreaming

The idiosyncratic splendor of ex-Rodin bassist/vocalist Tara Jane O'Neil's debut solo album, *Peregrine*, has proved a revelation to anyone who thought alt-rock had hit a creative dead end. Back in the mid-'90s Rodin unknowingly spearheaded the first post-Slint Louisville breakout, giving birth to countless tribute groups in the name of post-rock. Then along came Peregrine, a set of hazy songforms which drew more from the sun-soaked '70s recordings of the likes of Joni Mitchell and Van Morrison than, say, June Of 44. It is an uneasy listen, not because it's abrasive or sonically harsh but rather for the way it refuses to sit still, changing shape according to the circumstances and surroundings in which you hear it.



Tara Jane O'Neil

works best when you're in a state of distraction, listening to it drifting through from other rooms.

"I've heard that about a few of the records I've made," sighs O'Neil. "I can understand it. It's a good record to have breakfast with. I think, though, if listened to on headphones, erasing all other sonic distractions, you might find that it's a totally different record. It's an atmospheric record, I suppose, but it does have its own almost narrative thing. It can take you through its own rooms as well as finding its place in yours."

O'Neil led a pretty nomadic existence prior to moving to Louisville. She gained her musical education primarily through her brothers, a bunch of unrepentant Bread fans. "They taught me things maybe a ten year old wouldn't otherwise know. One of them taught me how to hear different parts in songs by playing Bread records for me. I played violin and piano for a couple of years and I had a radio but that was really it as far as music in the home goes. Then I ended up in Louisville."

Louisville's long rockers Squared Bar had recently folded and the remaining members had given up on their speedy post-Husker Du brand of hardcore in favour of a darker, more diluted music. The newly rechristened Slint singlehandedly created the Louisville sound: clipped and creaking guitars and ominous basslines all held together

by Brian McMahon's creepy, whispered vocals. O'Neil was busy writing songs in her bedroom when she was plucked out of potential obscurity by some friends and given the job as Rodin's bassist. "I have to admit that I was a little bit out of the loop and didn't really hear Slint until well after [1991's] *Spokenword* came out," she explains. "I had already become friends with Brian McMahon and was already playing in Rodin. Of course I loved that stuff and still do when I hear it." However the whole post-rock aftermath still puzzles her. "I feel pretty confused about it. I'm not sure what it is. It seems a kind of broad label and anyone around that time playing any kind of music could be credited with giving birth to it."

Rodin rode the post-Slint wave with real fervour but shortly after the release of their debut album, 94's *Rusty*, they called it a day. "We broke up," O'Neil states. "We had other things to do." Since then she's been quietly working on a number of projects, including the short-lived Sonora Pine, who made a couple of records on the Quarterstick label, and Retin, an acoustic/guitar/vocals duo active since '95, with three records to their name.

Peregrine is O'Neil's first experience of going it totally alone. "It was different on this record because I didn't really have structural collaborators. It was just me — I wrote the structures, left a lot undone, had questions and faith to figure it out when it came time to record. Having my own machines to record stuff helped the process of finding my way around parts that were ambiguous and I asked some people to come in and interpret stuff and apply their own character. I did a lot of walking around."

Heard in snatches as they breathe in and out of the mix, O'Neil's lyrics on *Peregrine* are unselfconsciously surreal, full of dream logic: "I do get lyrics and songs in my dreams," she avers. "It pisses me off because they are always the best thing ever. In the dream and then I wake and can't even remember what it was. I guess that the gift of the dream is that you can only have it when you're there. I read a lot of prose but I don't think that influences my writing as much as the poems I've read. There's something different about fitting poetry rhythms into existing song rhythms, which is a totally different beast. I think Jon Mitchell is the best at that. Michael Hurley is good, Leonard Cohen, Nick Drake, Beckie Lee Jones. Any folk or Country storytelling kind of writing."

If O'Neil's rollick of favourite songwriters seems fairly retro, she's quick to defend her tastes, even as she admits that she's sick to death with the idea of keeping up with contemporary sounds. "To me that's really the polar opposite of thinking of things in a new way, right? I'm more interested in scavenging around new and old things I come across and learning ways to make shapes out of music. In Retin it's all about songwriting and that's good, but I also want to write songs and fuck with them — make them as sonically pleasing as much as they are just good songs."

O'Neil is now based in New York, yet her spacious, airy music hasn't been affected by the traffic noise and urban squalor that people commonly think of as informing the New York sound. "Well, I do have a tendency to hibernate," she laughs. "Remember, I'm from Louisville."

DAVID KEEMAN *Peregrine* is out now on Quarterstick

Haco

Hope for happiness

"I like pop culture and pop art," declares the maverick Japanese artist Haco "the very huge meaning of pop I don't know why, but the pop song is deepest for me. I often wonder why people like certain beats and why around the world people feel the same. This is too deep a subject really, but I read a very curious medical book which said that for the baby in the mother's womb listening to the sound of blood was similar to the pop music beat. In the beginning the fetus is like a snake, then second step guinea type, or kind of frog."

Haco's English is just about good enough to make things a little complicated. She punctuates our conversation with a regular "Mmm mmm," as she fields my questions. To my ears it's much the same sound that she makes when approving of the items that comprise our breakfast, each slice of bread and blob of jam greeted like a long lost friend. Through the charming slips and errors of a foreign tongue, her appetite for the positive comes across clearly.

"It means that originally people came from the sea," she adds, continuing her theory "ten million years ago... it took a long, long, long time. But in the mother's body all that time is very... pthwww!" And that compressed time

in human consciousness is somehow transcended by the rhythmic beat of pop music? "Maybe some memory — the very deepest — is stimulated."

It's an interesting theory, vividly containing as much manga science fiction as pop sociology and indicative of Haco's wide-eyed curiosity, her organic approach to composition, her surreal sense of humour. Deftly subversive and whimsically digressive, she slips like an eel between thoughts, indulging what Westerners would figure a typically Japanese passion for pch. n. mix. One moment she runs not through the dog days of heady urban aspiration, the next she floats through open windows of introspective calm.

Haco's idiosyncratic take on pop evolved in the early '80s, with the emergence of the Japanese new wave. A teenager in the cosmopolitan city of Kobe, she formed After Dinner, a brilliant, wildly eccentric avant rock group that examined and redefined almost every aspect of the genre, picking up a cult following in Europe but not really influencing younger players at home. "Maybe we were too radical," radical. But now the younger people have found out about After Dinner and it's a classic of the Japanese indie scene. The audience were a little bit too serious, too shy."

A bold performer, Haco can charm an audience with an effortless strum on a detuned mandolin, by singing a suddenly swooping note, or striking a closely miked tinapot. She's been compared to Kate Bush, presumably

Haco



bitstream

Neon signs: According to a recent missive from the Australian Extreme label, Phlebot, the label's SO CD set of Japanese noise by Misera Akita aka **Herzbow** is finally nearing completion — over six years since it was first announced! Apparently, the set was slated for release last year, but was further delayed by problems with the production of the accompanying Phlebot: Now. More info is promising delivery some time this year. For more info e-mail extremelabel.com or check the Website at www.extremelabel.com/australia +++

Spunk rock: The **Coil** duo of John Balance and Peter Christopherson are due to make an ultra-rare live appearance as part of Julian Cope's Cornucopia weekend at the Royal Festival Hall on 2 April. As Time Machines, they will be premiering a piece entitled "The Human Factor." Bring umbrellas! +++

Plunderphonia: **John Oswald** has had a busy year: he's just finished a one-note electroacoustic piece which will premier this month in Montreal, he's just completed a score for orchestra, rock piano and the voice of Glenn Gould for the National Ballet of Canada, he's currently working on the soundtrack for an eight-screen movie, his photoalbums will be displayed at London's Hayward Gallery in May, and a plunderphonia box set is in preparation. To keep up with his nefarious activities, check out www.f0.com +++

In the escalating race to document the early days of electronic music: Elipsis Arts have just stuck a potentially morose blow. Their 3CD box set **QWm — The Gurus Of Electronic Music** will be released sometime this spring. Its focus works from just about everyone from Marjonne Amacher to La Monte Young and Pierre Schaeffer to Jon Hassell. Info at www.elipsisarts.com +++

Emphasizing the art of sound design over perfunctory soundtrack balladries, the **School Of Sound** is a London-based symposium aiming for a synthesis of sound and vision both in practice and in theory. Featuring speakers like Miss Fagge, Manfred Eicher, Michael Choin, David Toop, Tom Paulin, Peter Wolles, Sarah Kozloff and Walker Murch, the third School Of Sound focuses on that most neglected element of the soundtrack — the voice. For information on the four-day event (12-15 April), tel 020 732 3 3437 +++

Band in a box: The **Greenobox** is a compact synthesizer containing a library of sounds from vintage and neo-sound vintage electronic instruments that has been sent to a variety of musicians in order to explore the ways in which they work. The results of this experiment — from musicians like Jean Jacques Perrey, Dick Hyman, Boek, Sonic Youth and John McEntire — have been collected on the Grand Royal CD **At Home With The Greenobox** +++

New York beatnik, jazz freak, photographer, poet, film maker and all-round downtown Renaissance man: **Ira Cohen** has just immortalized himself on **california Kings With Straw Hats**, a self-directed film about his trek to one of India's most sacred ceremonies, has recently been released on video by Mystic Fine (www.mysticfine.com) +++

Hit the north: **Auxiliary** The Wire's weekly Thursday night club at Bala in Q&A, Moravia, continues its live/electroacoustic/techno fusion into March with appearances from Mondoake (2 March), Albig and Jazzkammer (9), Phono and Bague Wisselhoff (16), Nood (23) and Snob vs Tiaman (30). Info from www.blayz.com **THE TRAWLER**



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NEW RELEASES

CD LR 276 EUGENE CHADBOURNE

I TALKED TO DEATH IN STEREO

As Dr. Chadbourne writes in his liner notes: "I hope listeners will enjoy this collection of material designed to show the great variety, depth of research and life-affirming philosophy of my various ensembles as the 20th century draws to a close." This CD signifies a definite change of direction in Dr. Chadbourne's music, the emphasis being on his singing. He finishes the CD with his favourite song "I've Got a Crush on You" and his singing will be a revelation for many. 68 minutes of sheer fun and pleasure.

CD LR 275 DOMINIC DUVAL WITH THE C.T. STRING QUARTET; **UNDER THE PYRAMID**

The previous CDs by Dominic Duval with the C.T. String Quartet got the highest critical acclaim. With this new recording Dominic Duval (bass), Thomas Ulrich (cello), Jason Hwang (violin) and Ron Lawrence (viola) take their instant composing to new heights. These four virtuosos sacrifice their ages for the sake of finding a totally unique sound in the history of chamber ensembles.

CD LR 283/284 EVAN PARKER/ BARRY GUY/
PAUL LYTTON & MARILYN CRISPELL
AFTER APPLEBY (double CD)

This is a double CD recorded immediately after the jazz festival in Appleby in July 1999 where the musicians performed both as a quartet and in separate combinations. The first disc was recorded in the studio, the second live at Vortex. Parker/Guy/Lytton has been called "arguably the greatest active improvising ensemble" (Down Beat) and Marilyn Crispell adds another distinctive voice to the trio. Extensive notes by Steve Kulak match the energy of the music.

CD LR 295 IVO PERELMAN/JAY ROSEN
THE HAMMER

As Walter Horn writes in his liner notes: "with this recording, tenor saxophonist Ivo Perelman, this time in company with drummer Jay Rosen, continues his deep exploration of the hither regions of improvised music: 'in part because of their willingness to unlearn and relearn the means whereby the beautiful is music may be created, Perelman and Rosen have given us a century-ending gift of extraordinary meaning'."

CD LR 267 JOELLE LEANDRE PROJECT with
Marilyn Crispell, Paul Lovens,
Richard Teitelbaum, Carlos Zingaro

Joelle Leandre had put together this extraordinary band to be recorded live at the Sons d'Ivry festival in France in January 1999. What happened on stage exceeded all expectations and turned this project into an active band: Marilyn Crispell - piano, Joelle Leandre - bass, Paul Lovens - drums, Richard Teitelbaum - electronics, Carlos Zingaro - violin. The music is a great boost to the art of instant composing.

CD LR 298 STEVE COHN featuring Reggie
Workman, Jason Hwang, Tom Varner
BRIDGE OVER THE X-STREAM

Recorded live at the Knitting Factory in January 1999, this band of top New York's musicians performs six original compositions by Steve Cohn in which he tries to reach a perfect balance between composition and improvisation. Reggie Workman is on bass, Jason Hwang on violin, Tom Varner on French horn, while the leader plays piano, shakuhachi, hochiki, shofar and percussion.

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because she waves her hands about a bit at the audience in the manner of a TV witch, casting a spell and firing with invisible powers. It's no great surprise to find her gestic on Acid Mothers Temple's *Potophasical Freak Out III*, Makoto Kawabuchi's ramshackle Gong-influenced rambles-jam, but this is a mere mystical holiday from her other projects. When *After Dinner* dissolved, she quit live music and spent the early '90s planning sound art exhibitions at Xebec, Kobe's high-tech gallery and rehearsal space where Altered States guitarist Kazuhisa Uchihashi staged his influential Beyond Innocence festivals. It was here that she teamed up with Onizuka Hiroaki's bass player Aburahi Tsuyama and Boredoms guitarist Seichi Yanemoto, both of whom feature on her new solo recording, *Happiness Proof*, along with ISO's Ichiraku Yoshimitsu, French machine musician Pierre Bastien and German percussionist Peter Holliger. Happy with the home-mixed results — she insists she's happy all the time, actually — Haco has gone on to engineer Ohayo Hachio, the second release from the trio Hachio, the determinedly idiosyncratic group featuring a wide palette of sounds ranging from the koto of Michiyasu Togi to Sachiko M's sinewaves. Devoid of the typical Japanese hang-ups about the work ethic, she's taken attack by this apparent flurry of activity. Kobe has an atmosphere she finds conducive to her laidback nature. Its vibe is a little casual, she explains, "with a lot of students who don't want to get a proper job. Tokyo is too much information. In Kobe you can find yourself more easily."

Believes in him: Kimmo Pohjonen

She plays me "Halo Doctor Norton", her hymn to the bespectacled computer utilities icon whose life comprises little more than examining and scrubbing down a gigantic disk: a lost creature beyond her reach. But Haco's empowering pop uncovers a world teeming with meaningless yet enchanting activity, reducing human history to a moment of glory and making the trivial curiously poignant. **ED BAXTER** *Happiness Proof is out now on P-Vine. Hachio's Ohayo Hachio is forthcoming on Toadix*

Kimmo Pohjonen

Main squeeze

"The main reason I play accordion is to try to do and express things that have not done or heard before," declares Finnish accordionist Kimmo Pohjonen. He has chosen an odd instrument with which to launch a fight into the unknown. Despised for many years by hipsters and contemporary composers alike, the accordion has more recently become a rather heartwarming instrument, welcomed into musical salons as almost a guarantee of blue collar authenticity or Latin flair. But can the accordion free itself from its folkloric associations enough to take the musician deep into unmappped territories? In the States there is Pauline Oliveros, contemplating the vast spaces opened up by her Deep Listening Band; and Guy Kluwek, who has played accordion with John Zorn and other downtown New Yorkers. And in Finland there is Kimmo Pohjonen.

"I started to play at the age of ten, in 1974," he recalls. "My father played, and still does, so I played first with him. Then I joined the local accordion club, where there were about 25 accordionists, but I was the only child in the group! At that time the accordion was considered to be so weird that I was very ashamed about my hobby and couldn't talk about it with my friends. When they saw my picture in the local newspaper, me with my accordion, they had a good reason to give me a hard time! But at the end of 1980, some of my musical friends became interested in what I was doing. I was invited to play in a pop band, which gave me a new attitude for playing. Also I realised that my instrument was not so out of fashion any more, many music makers had started to use accordion as a colourful effect in popular music. That gave a new credibility to the instrument that had previously had such an uncool reputation. Also Astor Piazzolla's music opened up the accordion world for many who had a negative opinion, many of them not even realising that the bandoneon is not the same instrument as the accordion."

After studies at Helsinki Conservatory, Pohjonen flung himself into a busy career, playing on more than ten albums a year and switching from folk to rock to avant garde styles within a dozen different groups. Even though he has moved away from folk music, he has

been named Finland's Folk Musician of the Year four times in as many years. "Ten years ago I was very keen on folk music, and I played it a lot," he says. "Nowadays I am a bit tired of it. I think it's in our nature that we want to find new things as well as preserve the old things. For me, it's time to create new things."

In 1997 Pohjonen brought his solo show to an accordion festival on London's South Bank. Dramatically lit and swathed in smoke, he provided the darkest, most heliose music of the festival. The accordion bellows gasped and heaved through loops and delays, conjuring up a sinking ship lashed by a storm. Like some torture engine painted by Hieronymus Bosch, for the finale the accordion dragged him down into hell amidst tormented rhythms and moans. "I had a great experience at my gig in Berlin last year," Pohjonen relates. "When it came to that part, which by the way isn't always exactly the same, the audience spontaneously cheered and applauded. It was quite overwhelming, like a mixture of wonder, thrill and even affection. I was deeply moved. The main thing for me is to try to make music that will somehow transport the audience to a different world from where they normally are."

Pohjonen's excellent solo album *Kielo*, released in March last year, showcases his extraordinary range. Incorporating folk and Techno rhythms, he also adds some harmonium to "Kielunsi", over which his voice squeals like the owls of *Gormenghast*. For most of this March, Pohjonen is touring with one of Finland's most popular rock singer-songwriters, Irmu Aaltonen. "Aaltonen is famous for using powerful electric guitars," Pohjonen explains. "The guitar player of his band, the one who does the heavy solos, is actually an accordionist [Pohjonen himself]. At the moment we are doing a performance called *Lobos*, with 11 musicians, two dancers and a designer who has planned special theatre and visual effects," he continues. "For example, we tried to develop new belows for my accordion. The idea was to use a material that allows us to put water and lights in the belows. Unfortunately we couldn't find a way to do it."

As well as solo performances in Canada and Russia, Pohjonen will play improvised music on a tour with French jazz percussionist Eric Empahard. An orchestral project is also in the pipeline. "This doesn't mean that it will be traditional classical music," Pohjonen reassures. "I try to approach these musicians in a totally different way from what they have experienced before. Improvising is one area to explore with this project, and I have been developing for them the same kind of sound system that I use in my solo concerts."

"Nowadays I don't listen to so much accordion music any more," he continues. "The latest accordion record I really enjoyed was [Madagascar] Regis Gazo's album. He has a good spirit. I used to like some old Finnish two-row players, but most of them have passed away. If I hear classical accordion it's too cold, not passionate enough for me. Or, if it's folk music, it's often too ordinary for my taste, although there certainly are exceptions. Maybe that's the reason I try to find a new kind of expression for the instrument I love. **CLIVE BELL**



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interstellar overdriver

In 1965, John Coltrane chose drummer **Rashied Ali** to accompany his journey into interstellar space. Today, a new ecstatic generation, including Nels Cline and Gregg Bendian, is chasing their cosmic trails. Words: Howard Mandel. Photos: Melanie Grizzel



"**W**ow," says drummer Rashied Ali, bemused, proud, even a little awed. He's listening closely to *Interstellar Space Revisited*, drummer Gregg Bendian and guitarist Neil Cline's homage to John Coltrane and Ali's original still unparalleled *Interstellar Space* turning the CD case over and over in his hands. His ears are cocked to the sleigh bells and tom-tom tremolos that open "Mars." "That's a Rashied Ali lick," he exclaims. These guys really did their homework. I'm very impressed. They did the whole *Interstellar Space*? It makes me so happy — this music has been ignored for all these years, and there aren't many groups out there playing it even now."

Interstellar Space may have been ostracized by jazz conservatives and neo-traditionalists since it first emerged from the Impulse! vault, seven years after Coltrane's death. But for free music travellers, it remains a cosmic waystation to be revisited time and time again. "There's Dave Liebman, he plays some of it, and Pirra Mutiene," Ali continues, referring to his own longstanding ensemble with saxophonists Louie Bellegems and Allan Chase (and for one date, John Zorn), pianist Greg Murphy, bassists William Parker, Joe Gallant and new member Wilbur Morris. "We did a couple tunes from *Interstellar*, but not the whole CD. We did the 'Meditations Suite', too, and we've done some things from Trane's *Live In Japan* album. We've played Ayler's music, also. Oh, and ROVA Saxophone Quartet, they've recorded *Ascension*."

"But you're probably up on it more than I am," Ali says suddenly. "I'm so busy trying to get the music together here."



'Here' is the compact basement studio he runs in the formerly industrial downtown New York building he's owned for close to three decades. Ali's studio is a functional workplace — fit for professional recording and unstirring rehearsal, not fancy or affected in any way. It's plenty good enough for working up repertoire with The New Art Quartet led by harmonious guitarist James Blood Ulmer, featuring Ali, pianist John Hicks and bassist Reggie Workman (another former Coltrane associate), or for cutting

demos of Ali's new up'n'comers group featuring tenorist Greg Tardy, bassist Omar Awtal and pianist James Hunt. But most of the basement is unfinished, with walls cut from rock. It's obviously underground, without windows. Not a dungeon, though — a bunker, or better yet, a reactor core, ground zero for fusion, fusion and free jazz explosions, a secret lab from which powerful emanations spread.

Leaning back in his chair, pulled up to the studio's mezz desk, Ali looks comfortably proprietary. However, he is as down to earth as any working man. If unusually fit and seemingly cool at age 64. He maintains his building — a full-time job and continuous investment — his family and his music, all with an air of pragmatic immediacy. He's always kept himself busy. In the 1970s, for instance, in the wake of his mentor Coltrane's death and at a relative peak of his own celebrity, Ali ran his music club Ali's Alley in this very building, an important corner of the loft jazz scene, and well remembered for pianist/saxophonist Jaki Byard's rampant Monday night Apollo Stompers big band gigs (among other attractions).

At that time Ali also established the scrappy, monochrome-packaged Survival Records, which the Knitting Factory label has recently licensed for resuscitation on CD. Its catalogue encompasses Ali's albums with tenor saxophonist Frank Lowe (*Duo Exchange*), violinist Leroy Jenkins (*Swift Are The Winds Of Life*), introducing guitarist Ulmer (on *Rashied Ali Quartet*), with his quartet featuring young bassist Stanley Clarke live at the Brooklyn Afro-jazz storefront The East, and one disc by street-savvy vocalist Joe Lee Wilson (who also ran a jazz loft in that era, Ladies First), titled *What Would It Be Without You?*

Ali was recording and touring back then with Alice Coltrane, John's widow. He collaborated with drummers Andrew Cyrille, Milford Graves and Sunny Murray, and in the 80s he formed the invincible Phalanx with Ulmer, bassist Srirone and saxophonist George Adams. Over the decades he's studied with Philly Joe Jones, recorded with Archie Shepp (*On The Night*), and toured with Hot Tuna. With such a stellar pedigree, Ali has become recognised as an authentic voice from the avant-garde tradition.



Roland All now (main picture) and then (inset)

which after four decades has survived the test of time

"I don't feel like an elder yet, passing down the wisdom," Ali hastens to maintain. "I'm not in that groove. But I do feel confident in my art form. I'm not involved in any schools or teaching or anything like that. Only in recording music and playing it."

Born Robert Patterson in Philadelphia, the oldest of three brothers who all became drummers in the footsteps of older cousins who drummed in the Jimmy Heath/John Coltrane circles of the late 40s, Ali has long been identified as exclusively "avant garde." He doesn't exactly disagree, and is honoured to stand for uncompromising music, but perhaps we shouldn't be so quick to pigeonhole.

Ali got his professional start with duo-woo and R&B groups before getting turned on to Ornette Coleman in the 50s. Back then, he swapped hip drum licks with his brother Muhammad's friend Sunny Murray, and soon upon moving to New York in 1963 he set off on a tour of Europe with Sunny Rollins. Ali was enthralled with the era's best drummers, but contends, "I never felt I mastered straightahead, the conceptions of Philly Joe [Jones], Max [Roach] and [Art] Blakey. I drew from their conceptions, but that's not what I was about. I was trying to master how to play the drums."

Although he's explored his links with a particular musical history circa 1965 (Ali joined Coltrane's group a few months after the blazing, freemorph Ascension), he lives in the clear present and the near future. His unique approach to rhythm, his interactive propensity, spontaneity and candour are as bracing now as when he first sat in with Coltrane at the Hall Note in November 1965. Bold enough to ask for that chance and persist until Coltrane gave him the nod, Ali became a sub for Coltrane's quartet maestro Elvin Jones, then the regular second drummer in Coltrane's extended ensemble with Pharoah Sanders (as heard on the Impulse! classic *Meditations*), and finally in 1966, when Jones resigned from Coltrane's employ, he took over as the saxophone's mainstay.

Ali's tenure with Coltrane was controversial from the start. Early on, he didn't have the technique or experience to match Jones, and that polyrhythmic bombardier was not silent about his dislike of playing with the younger drummer, nor of Coltrane's interest in a second percussion field complicating his own. When Jones and McCoy Tyner left Coltrane, Ali was accused in print, and by the departing musicians themselves, of having broken up one of the best ensembles in jazz.

But then as now, Ali thrummed up rhythmic abstractions — far-flung tangents reaching toward the chaotic edge of the percussive galaxy. His continuous prouction seemed to disdain a regular beat, yet never completely abandoned common pulse. Ali's centre of sonic gravity was higher than Jones's, pinned to cymbals and snare more than bass and tom-toms; he would swing in the classic sense if Coltrane allowed him the space to do so, but he himself seldom instituted a conventional ching-a-ling rhythm. During his two year tenure with Coltrane, obviously a time of enormous challenge and consequent accelerated growth, Ali dared to map out his own universe of possibilities. After *Meditations*, his boundless, flat-out energy, percussive stimulus and instant response contributed significantly to Coltrane's great, late albums: *Live At The Village Vanguard Again*, *Stellar Regions*, *Expression* — as well as the monumental, four-hour-plus of astral playing documented on *Live In Japan*.

And then there's *Interstellar Space*. Recorded at Rudy Van Gelder's Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey studio, five months before Coltrane's death from liver cancer at age 41 on 17 July 1967, *Interstellar Space* was released with little fanfare in 1974. Though never as celebrated as the deeply soothing *A Love Supreme*, say, or the freemorph *Ascension*, and perhaps not as immediately accessible as any of the Impulse! recordings of Coltrane's classic quartet, these sax/drums duo, named after the planets in the solar system, were nonetheless immediately embraced by Coltrane aficionados as irreproachable performances, music delivered from on high and sent down to earth, representing elemental forces with sonic grandeur.

If *Interstellar Space* remains Ali's best known statement, it may be largely because its duo format leaves his work so exposed. Here as in few of his recordings with Coltrane,

Ali's every stroke and footfall can be heard and appreciated. His narrative sensibility while mysterious in its devices. Carries the day. He helps every piece announce itself develop and conclude his playing both dynamic and detailed. As the most transparent of Coltrane's late and reputedly difficult works, *Interstellar Space* won favour as a cult item. No wonder the album made Ali's career.

"Cult item?" Rashed considers. "Well, maybe it's generated some legendary talk, but if it were selling well, I expect that would pay off in more phone calls and some gigs for me. Which it hasn't. It may be a piece of history ahead, but if it's a cult item, it should still be rockin' — isn't it? Well, that's cool. Rashed is still here, and playing better than ever," he adds, not lately modest. "Not that I felt back then that I got the credit I deserved. You know, Coltrane and I made that music together."

Indeed they did. The four tracks initially released on LP — "Mars," "Venus," "Jupiter" and "Saturn" — were reissued in 1991 on GRP/Impulse! with the bonus cuts "Leo" and "Jupiter Variation," and are scheduled for reissue again this spring under Universal Music's auspices. They comprise a very loose suite linked by Coltrane and Ali's mutual exploration of motifs relating to those planets' distances from the sun, and the zodiacal attribution of the Roman gods for whom they're named (respectively, from the liner notes: "Battlefield of the cosmic giants: love, supreme wisdom, joy").

Revolving interstellar space: Gregg Bendure and Ali Coltrane



Coltrane's tenor sax dominates, howling with enormous urgency across light years of space/time, conveying a human heart at the core of it all. Ali rises to every opportunity, projecting a fluid pace and dense hyperactivity from the get-go, boldly forging his own way or shadowing Coltrane closely — as when using brushes on the balladic "Venus" — but never locking the tenorist into a pattern or a tempo. Their combined power inflates the duo to the size of an orchestra.

"The way he plays allows the sort of maximum freedom," Coltrane famously said of Ali to 60s jazz polemicist Frank Kofsky. "He's laying down multi-directional rhythms all the time." There's no decline of dynamic tension, either, when Ali solos, as on the extended introduction to "Saturn." *Interstellar's* 1:1 and a half minute climactic track.

Ali remembers that era vividly. "Trane was bigger than life," he says, and whatever he stepped into he would command. Me, I was playing with my idol, and I had more confidence in my ability than in my conception. I felt not so much unprepared as apprehensive.

I never knew what Trane was going to do and he never told me what to do, so I did what I could to make it comfortable. I drew from the straightahead conceptions, yes, and I can't forget Elvin, because I got so much from him. Elvin brought so much to the music without Elvin there wouldn't have been no Trane. I was like an extension of Elvin. I had to move on from what he did, though the same way that in my straightahead stuff I was always trying to find something else to do.

"Now I think my concepts big enough to deal with straight beat, and all around that beat. I can augment and add whatever I know, and if I've got the right musicians we can take it wherever we want to, return it to whatever it was. We'd do that on some of those things with Trane, took a rhythm like 5/4, 6/8, 3/4, 7/4, and start playing very freely within it. I'd keep the initial feeling there but play something

very different, and be fairly easily able to get back

I wasn't always sure of what I did then, because I didn't get a chance to sit down and listen to the playbacks. We'd record and that was the last time I'd hear it. I'd damn near forget it until I'd hear it again," he admits. "But sometimes now I listen to something I did with Trane before I go to a gig to remind myself of something I used to do. Yeah, I'm still working from stuff I wasn't even sure of."

To try to recapture this exceptionally spontaneous music would seem patently insane, but that was the task that Nels Cline and Gregg Bendian, two players from America's avant rock and improv scenes, set themselves on last year's interstellar *Space Revisited*. Cline is an occasional collaborator with Sonic Youth, whose *Goodbye 20th Century* covered some gritty modernist classics, avant garde dueling, it seems, is becoming a prerequisite among this enthusiastic younger generation. Before spinning the entire eight minutes of Cline and Bendian's version of "Saturn," a US college radio DJ announced: "When the album arrived at the station, we all laughed at it — then we listened and I still don't know what to say." Cline and Bendian do not attempt to impersonate Coltrane and Ali so much as invoke them, by so alluding to their sources. Los Angeles-based Cline and New Jersey Bendian (self-described "white suburban guys") give the jazz repertoire movement another wicked spin.

"I grew up listening to *Interstellar Space*," Bendian explains one night after performing with Cline at Tonic, a busy, bare-bones jazz club on Manhattan's Lower East Side. They've just held the stage with total command of their microsound for an hour, revisiting *Interstellar Space* once more. They played loud, fast and furiously but without superfluous show, their interpretations of Coltrane and Ali's music were reverent, but far from slavish. After all, how do you translate Coltrane's volcanic utterances into guitar licks? (Not that others haven't tried before: of John McLaughlin, Carlos Santana, even Roger McGuinn and Lou Reed.)

"When I got into free jazz, *Interstellar* was one of the most important albums to me," Bendian continues. "But this project came out of a joke: I was playing drum duets with Alex, Nels's brother, creating Coltrane-like vast sheets of sound, and Nels said kind of sarcastically, 'Well, if you're going to do that, why don't you just cover *Interstellar Space*?' We all looked at each other and thought, 'Yeah! To prepare I engaged in heavy study of it, re-examined the records scrupulously, heard some things in the remastered CD I never had in the LP, did some transcriptions and struggled personally with specific musical issues — like where to put the one."

Nels Cline followed a similar process and arrived at his own decisions, what processing to use, what tone to effect, and never to attempt literally imitate saxophones. Then, explains Bendian, "We worked together to decide what we'd take as source material, what were the 'heads', where Trane and Rashid might be stretching so we should stretch there ourselves, when they'd pick up the tempo for a decisive compositional effect. We wanted to keep certain motifs, the sleigh bells were one choice, because we liked that texture, and maintain relationships we heard between Trane and Rashid on the record."

"It was very interested in how Trane structured things, because the pieces are structured — they don't begin and end the same way, or develop all alike. We wanted to know the album note for note, but not copy it note for note. We wanted to be faithful yet interpretive."

"There was also a political issue in play in this project. This album has had a very big influence on everyone's concept of free improvising, though later Trane has most often been labelled difficult, wild, crazy, not understandable. Really, why hasn't his later work gotten the same respect as his 'classic quartet'?"

Louie Belogens, tenor saxophonist in Rashid Ali's current group Pirma Matena, broadly agrees with Bendian's take. "What struck me as a teenager when I first started hearing late Trane," he says, "was the deep spirituality of the music, its undeniable sincerity, and that here was a man honestly searching, using music in pursuit of his personal vision and understanding of the world. In the 60s and early 70s that was in the culture and it was reflected in Coltrane's music perhaps more than in any other."

It wasn't about blazing chord substitutions or virtuosic sax technique — it was somebody playing. It was about moving music forward, playing from a commitment to bringing honesty, integrity and self-understanding into the world," stollates Belogens who pours himself unhesitatingly through his sax on a lengthy version of "Saturn" on his duo CD with Ali, *Rings Of Saturn*. Ali plays openly, not trying to recapture anything more of his rendition from 32 years back than its basic inspiration. Belogens, too, avoids the presumption of appropriating Coltrane's recorded notes.

"There's really some healing aspect to this music, and it's a shame it isn't widely heard," says Belogens. "Yet it's a credit to the music that it isn't chosen on airplane headphone channels, or that kind of thing. We're onto something right here: a music that can't be turned into a sneaker commercial or a movie soundtrack — that defines the integrity of this music. There would be an element of corruption if it were to be involved in the next Hollywood blockbuster."

"People still think it's a music of anger and rage," he says wistfully, "but the musicians then, Trane and Rashid included, were involved in spiritual activities from Africa, the East, the gospel church — and they were working through their own anger, so the music was a process, eventually delivering them and their listeners to a place of peace. What Rashid's playing, his solution to all the problems posed by music, is so open, free, filled with love and mastery, that it kind of lets you know that whatever happens, it's going to be all right. Not in a simple-minded way, his playing involves discipline, structure, and a way that in another drummer might be very chaotic, a human sensibility that tells a story. If you approach it from a drummer's perspective, his solos are full of mastery and complexity, from an audience perspective they're full of folk wisdom, wonderful zones and being alive. When I play with him it's a wonderful challenge to live up to that. That simple perspective of telling a story — that the music's not just about the upmost harmonics, circular breathing, multiphonics — keeps it real."

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"I never felt I mastered 'straightahead', but that's not what I was about. I was trying to master how to play the drums"

Rashid Ali might say he hasn't gotten there yet, but he wouldn't deny Coltrane and *Interstellar Space* gave him a push toward his ultimate destination. "The music I play is definitely a continuation of all that," he allows, "plus

Nat Cole, Earl Bostic, Louie Armstrong, Pres, Bile. The people my father used to listen to around our house when I was growing up. My jazz, it had to come from somewhere. If people hear it as a radical break, that's too bad, because music is always coming from some place. Bolden to Oliver to Armstrong, Bird to Diz to Trane, then you mix in Cecil and Ornette."

"I think jazz is a music that makes changes — the music changes all the time, it doesn't stay the same." Ali avows. "I used to think 'making the changes' was just that not about hitting chords of a progression on time. But you know, it wouldn't be jazz if it didn't change. It comes from the people — people who have different backgrounds, different preferences — that's where jazz comes from: change. It has to be different. That's the real change. And that change," he concludes with a sigh, "has been around at least 40 or 50 years." ... *Rashid Ali & Louie Belogens's Rings Of Saturn* is out now on Knitting Factory. Nels Cline & Gregg Bendian's *Interstellar Space Revisited* is available on Atonistic.



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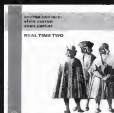
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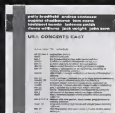
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Ed Baxter lifts the lid on **Ruined Piano Studies**, a secret worldwide conspiracy to rescue worn-out instruments from an early grave in the deserts of Australia and Colorado

The piano has been under attack for a while now, assaulted by Laurel and Hardy, abused by Fluxus, broken up by Walter Marchetti, pushed off high buildings by cartoon cats. These elaborate and eclectic acts of destruction, expressive of an abiding hatred of the bourgeoisie, merely accelerate the inevitable. Death comes eventually to every piano. Some, like Liberace's might die of shame, others like those of Jools Holland, we suppose must lie awake at night praying for oblivion to overtake them: while those that have endured the sausage-fingered thump of Diamanda Galas play stoically for one hour under the healing hands of John Tëbury. But these are the aristocrats of the piano world, long-lived and pampered. Outside the concert halls across the world their distant domestic cousins are left to decay, and the myth of the elephants' graveyard finds a curious parallel in the hidden mausoleum of ruined pianos: whose worned voices stand proud like the fingernails of a youthful corpse, their bodies caved in and crumpled.

Australian composer and improviser Ross Bolleter has devoted himself to tracking them down and bringing them momentarily back to life. Bolleter is the instigator of WARPS, the World Association for Ruined Piano Studies. His *Left Hand Of The Universe* is a composition for up to seven performers playing left-handed on any number of ruined pianos on three continents simultaneously. The first realisation of this epic work took place in September 1997 in Slovakia (with ruined pianists Michal Munn, Milan Adamcok and Zdenek Plachý), Colorado (with among others Dan Wencsek and Stephen Scott) and Western Australia (with Bolleter and Nathan Crotty): a simultaneous blind improvisation designed to reveal the pleasures of synchronicity. Bolleter is strict about what he's after: the piano has to be buried rather than neglected (such as you find in the back rooms of pubs or your parents' garage) or devastated (such as you might find in a war zone or after an earthquake). The Romantic associations are emphasised in the realisation of the composition: whereby the addition of a human figure to the ruin completes the picture. Local colour is incidental: the deposits of 1000 pigeons, the scent of the blood of 200 slaughtered sheep, the division of an entire country — each provides a distant background rum of endless metaleptic potential which is obscurely underpinned by the ruin itself. So too Bolleter's insistence on only left-handed performances, emphasises the depressive and dreamlike, and lays claim to magical powers by which failure is valorised as universal, a sinister shadow cast across the ages.

Before its expressive articulation then, the composition is characterised by the quizzical and tentative relation of the player to the warped instrument and its total and unpredictable responses. As with some of the more radical of current probes into the structure of contemporary music (one thinks of players such as Nicolas Collins, like Monk Keith Rowe inevitably.) Left



Bringing out the dead: Michal Munn and (above) Ross Bolleter

broken musics

Hand appropriates instrumentation itself afresh in its perverse search after the abandoned and rotten. Its posturing of the player is suggestive not of a belated association of Jean Dubuffet's anthropological requirements of art brut — from the dentures of civilisation comes forth an unshed and insane raw art of incandescent ineptitude, such that it overthrows and redeems the apologetic official culture — so much as an alchemical process in which said player is the secret ingredient precipitating a seemingly magical transformation, where an apparently exhausted resource

is encountered symbolically as well as physically. Mindful of the ecological element of rot, it embraces and colludes with the deterioration of melody, of purposefulness, of the instrument itself and the ideological edifice it comprises — a fitting methodology at the end of a century of unmitigated disillusion and worldwide waste.

Of necessity, too, the music of *Left Hand* is uniformly desorientating, a mournful celebration of its own relationship to 'proper' piano music. Bolleter says, 'All that fine 19th century European craftsmanship, all the damp and unrequited loves of Schumann, Brahms and Chopin dry out and degrade into a heap of rotten wood and rusting wire,' and the singularity of art music's monological address to posterity is subverted in the fragmentary, left-handed improvisations on broken instruments. The fragments are perceived on the one hand in relation to an apparent original (to the piano's former self, to an ideal piano and the monumental canon it represents), and on the other hand in relation to a new whole (figured in Bolleter's blunt question: 'What is a piano?') a totality supplemented and questioned by the abandoned ruin. This double reading, realised in a collage in which alchemy is allowed ample breathing space, makes the remix of the three geographically discrete recordings in the finished *Left Hand* truly universal and represents the ruined piano as a figure of a ruined world. Synchronicity, the psychic manifestation of the doubling effect, allows for unerring moments of lucidity in the flux of relativity, suggestive of a spatial collapse that further informs Bolleter's runs. I'm rereading an anecdote in the sleeve notes of one of Bolleter's CDs, *Crow Country* (a selection of his best work over the last 11 years), to ensure I'm not missing up his solo work with the transglobal *Left Hand*, when his voice on *Left Hand* starts reading aloud the seismae anecdote about secretly playing a piano in the bush. Time collapses in on itself like an exploding star.

Left Hand deals in — precisely — the inevitability of collapse, each piano struck or caressed in circumstances suggestive of the transitory and partial: a lunar eclipse over the Indian Ocean, the shambling of a babar divorce in central Europe, the baffled attention of a crowd of American music lovers. There's nothing exotic about it: on the contrary, this music has a strange familiarity, the vast distances between performers and the haphazard sound of the ruined instruments notwithstanding. The beautiful waxes, trembles and shudders of these pianos are those of the uncanny dissolution of contemporary domesticity, summoning up visions of a wilderness only fitfully kept at bay by thin partition walls and warded off by the swag of individual identities. Seek them out, lift their lids, let them into your life. Ross Bolleter's *Left Hand Of The Universe* and *Accordion Lives*. *Eulogies And Wakes with Rob Munn* are out now on WARPS. *Crow Country* will be released later this year on Popgun. Ross Bolleter can be contacted at bolleter@inet.net.au. More info from Michal Munn's Website: nec.sabco.sk/lopus/mca/sneh/pages/index97.htm



23 years after their art attack first outpaced punk audiences, **Wire** have sprung back into rehearsal and finds them in rude health, combative and inventive as ever, and still



flies

action. Ian Penman meets the group in
revelling in the absurd. Photos: Tim Kent

O ver the river, a soundproofed room. Musicians and musicians' debris: a
laptop set list, spent plectrums, stockpiled Silk Cut, a spray of Saturday
news. Four figures in a room: four sculptors and the noise they shape.
Four men, middle aged, short haired, unexceptional, unexpressive,
kempt: a Beekeeper, a Swimmer, a beat farmer and a naturalised
Swede. Bruce Gilbert, static, spectral, studying his guitar strings intently, attuned to the
spectral hum he touched off 30 seconds ago. E. Graham Lewis, a very manonette,
spitoe twisting and grimacing, throwing himself into things body and head. Colin
Newman, right hand a blue blur thrash, a wry smile the centre of his familiar clipped
Song. Robert Grey (aka Gotohedi), sleepy faced, concentrate, a physical pivot. Four
figures, and an instantly recognisable scene: Rock Band In A Rehearsal Room. The
noise they make is an encouraging sound — wild, electrifying, ragged, fast, decidedly
not the table-top imitation of timeless noise you hear emanating from so many younger
bands. Here are Wire, an old chorus, their here-now noise.

These days, you might say everyone is younger than Wire. It is 23 years since they
first thrashed out their sound in rooms like this. The PopM dance, it's an old romance
but they haven't gone to sleep. Cut forward: the Wire corpus now a sprawling
conurbation and the four group members are nearing the end of a run-through for a
forthcoming 'reunion' (It sometimes seems as if their whole career has been a series
of 'reunions' — an eternal return of the same secession, shift and reassembly.) They
began their public history in a gritty ex-gay dive called the Roxy, whereas their return
will be on the banks of a cultured river: in the genteel Queen Elizabeth Hall, there will
be dance, video, DJ skramishes, solos, doubles, disguises — and, finally, one more time,
another Wire.

WIRE: dictionary definition = metal in the form of a very flexible thread

T hey have always been flexible, these four, indeed it's been a central and saving
grace: never quite 'a Band' — fixed for eternity, self-fettersing — but never quite
disbanded/defunct. Always another fluctuation up their sleeves, rarely predictable, a
self-deconstruction in process: vigilant affirmation skirting the edges of negation.
Good tunes, too.

One of the good things about talking to Wire around the interview's inevitable pub
tables is the absence of the sadiwe said, cross/we — contra the impression I'd been
given that talking to them was going to involve a delicacy of negotiation to match the
current Northern Ireland talks. Long knives in Putney? Far from it. If there are icy
crosscurrents blowing around the perimeters of the set-up — the odd flare as each
member manoeuvres to register their own private illumination of matters — still there's

in the
ointment

Reformed characters: Graeme Lewis,
Colin Newman, Robert Gray, Bruce Gilbert



nothing to contradict Colin Newman when he says: "Wire at its best is based on a totally unspoken language. OK... it's a bunch of blokes and they've all got different agendas and different ideas and of course sometimes it can be a bit head to head but there was always the potential for a very good partnership of ideas. The fact that you're sitting here with me and Bruce together is a sure sign."

A sure sign of a volatile but fruitful alliance. Graham: vociferous spooking for a debate, analytical, passionate going on paranoid to the point that he'll hate this... he retains the punkiest attitude. Robert: self-contained, silent, silent asked and then practical and self-deprecating to a fault. Colin: differently vociferous, an enthusiastic firing in 19 directions at once, a wide open autodidact. Bruce: wiry, measured, accommodating, wide-angle moderator, long game, extremist, noise spy.

As anecdote often betrays history's true complexion, so first impressions can betray telltale signs... and on this showing, Wire are in ruddy good health. Lewis and Newman, especially look aspic-young and fit. Musical health, too, if they were 'new' today, twenty-something years younger, they would surely be hailed as a nose-brand sensation. Earlier today they played so hard they blew out an amp, twice.

I think our past is safe in the hands of men such as these.

They're not calling this a 'comeback' even though February's South Bank performance, where they are preparing to play 'all old stuff', will be followed by three nights at London's Garage, a low-key presence at the All Tomorrow's Parties weekend, even a short US tour. Today Wire are promoting a history lesson: a floorplan, a flow chart. Four figures on a stage and the noise they make when together. Four figures in a room... and the clues they left behind.

"They've been asked to reform before and said no. 'If you'd asked me five years ago I'd have definitely said no,'" says Newman. They were asked last year and, *voilà*, face said yes. Given a proven readiness to fall gaily upon the 'new' realms of electronica, concrete mixes and remix mutability, you might begin to see one reason they have to stage themselves: A first guess: they saw the concatenation of current 'scenes' as an opportune moment, an ideal space to reflag their now voluminous and resonant archive. Changes in the last three to five years have recontextualized the way we look back and what we find there. Now is a good time to draw a line from this link to that point. To hear old propositions anew. In Wire's case, not just their group catalogue, but all their 'solo' projects too. A chance to illuminate shared histories. For example the four albums Gilbert/Lewis released under the Dome moniker (between 1980-83) deserve an overview to themselves. But one example will suffice for now. Go to *Dome 1*. Listen to "Armoner". Use it in blindfold tests on friends. Draw up lines to the Post-Vocal landscape. Redraw an epoch of two.

20 years later history is up for a remix and such outer-ambient sonics may finally find their audience. The posting of an appreciative 'community' matters, on some level (it's so obvious). Five years ago, they wouldn't have done this. "So it seems to me," affirms Newman, "yes, it's coming out of a positive period when all the styles break down, when rock music is being reinvented by youthful Germans." He laughs loudly. "I mean, we are ostensibly still a rock band — we don't sound anything like A Rock Band but we are still closed in execution to how a rock band makes music; that is, to how a dance project would sound. But yes — suddenly it does make an awful lot of sense, in the sense of the time is right, let's do it now."

Gilbert backs this up: "yes, the whole 'sampling thing' that is today's event horizon has some definite bearing on this Wiretum. I'm not sure if it's a conscious thing but I think the fact that we're not, shall we say, embarrassed is significant."

Not embarrassed, hell no. Because on any level their combined archives are a treasure trove. Gilbert as DJ/Beeper at the beyond-Apex end of club culture murmurs and tremors and roaches... noise like all the ways and particles you hear day in day out in the city... lightpinks, vehicular beats, warp through walls, ambiguous screams. Lewis now resident in Sweden, engaged in solving the alone of 'solo artist' or 'group activity' down into almost infinitesimal divisions, pinnings, cellwork. Surprising work, from sculpted drone to cheeky remix. Plus Newman, most of all

perhaps, on whom Techno seems to have had a fully Damascene effect — his points rewired and cells rearranged, genetic makeup remodelled, a swimmer in new musics, looting from drum and basses to ambient, immersed, engaged, fired.

Unlike many ex-groups who return from the wilderness when prospects of reform are dangled before them, they all (with the exception of Grey, who turned his back on the rock life for organic farming, hanging on to his drums on a Tobby level for a while) have busy creative lives and though it's easy to think of them (the WR3) as studio people, they all continue to play live in one form or another — even if as Gilbert wryly says, it tends to be at "strange electronic festivals."

"Our own correspondent is sorry to tell, of an uneasy time that all is not well." Sometimes you suspect that there is a bit of delirium going on here too, but that's hardly surprising. They are full of enthusiasm for the present, and the current Wire and who would want to go through old in-fights, petty ego static or mindgames with some stranger and his tape recorder?

Still, when Lewis gives me a bit of an earbashing, alluding to old (as he sees it) rock press betrayals (having objected to my too-casual use of the P word 'punk' as conversational shorthand) — traces of uncorroded anger show through, and, somewhat ironically, it could be 1977 again. Accumulated slights, a trace violence that is in one light just a restatement of their opening words to the Romy audience in 1977 "Pay attention, we're Wire." Pay attention: it's the least we can do (and sometimes we don't even manage that). It can also be viewed as 'arrogance', which is probably a musician's practical recourse in times of (perceived or actual) isolation. On the one hand they deny any residual 'bitterness' over times when their innovations were overlooked, on the other, they still appear to smart at being forever lazily labelled as the 77 era's 'arty punks', when in the course of three years, 77-78-79 and three albums (*Pink Flag*, *Chairs Missing*, 154) they turned 180 degrees away from any unkempt origins.

Musicians live in a world of microscopic studio detail: practical considerations, tones and calibrations. They talk of clumsily gating the drum sound before there were drum machines, of 30 foot tape loops that stretched around a room, changing bass strings nightly for a certain clean sound. As it happens, I have a certain taste for such details these days, but (they think) we just want to know if they ever punched one another out in the studio.

Eventually all of them — not just Lewis — leak a certain disappointment at the God that failed, at how soon it (the bold axe of 77) went awry. Something in Wire wouldn't/won't sit there settle down, settle for less, settle for the easy options, the inear shape the old forms. And, underneath it all, there's a certain tender spot to do with the way 'class' in the UK still, deep down, pre-exists in every particle of any exchange or definition: every allowed access or blocked possibility. No surprise, then, that Wire met up at art college, a traditional destination for people with no choice in the game of self-invention. A laboratory, a social pot-dish. A centre for marginal

A project the image, which will in time become a concrete dream." As Newman readily concedes, "Wire wasn't really a mates band." And for that we should all be properly thankful — less of the 'last gang in town' bulshit to deal with down the line.

The birth of Wire was in fact a kind of coup, with the WR4 taking over the structure of a pre-existing group called Overload. This was one of a series of groups (various people in and out) engineered in and around the Watford 'campus' scene in the early to mid-70s by one George Gill, who Wire now fondly describe as 'half poet, half piss artist... a poet-yobbo'. Gilbert was employed as a technician at the college's sound lab so they had access to tape equipment. He recalls, "We used to use the soundproof facilities, pretend we were rock stars."

Gill was at this point the main songwriter, there was no drummer and a temporary bass player Newman on the loose from a failed relationship had entrusted his way in Gilbert brought in his friend Lewis, as both writer and bassist, and Grey (a friend of a friend of etc.) was enlisted because "all we knew was he had access to a drum kit and a space to rehearse in." Now a five piece, at this point they were still mainly playing

"When that incredible wall of harmonics began to develop, I thought: This is going to be OK. I wouldn't mind spending a few years doing this"

lily material but, recalls Newman, "the more interesting stuff was the more sonic kind of side of it. Three of us with one amp — all plugged in making a fearsome racket with guitars. That kind of abstraction was actually more interesting than the songs and when we realised that, it started to become something. We started to develop a repertoire. I started to write. Graham started to give me text, and then George rather famously broke his leg when passed one night trying to steal an amplifier from a group he didn't like," Gilbert continues. "During the period when he was hospitalised we started rehearsing without him — and the first thing we did was dump all of George's guitar solos, and all the songs became somewhat more truncated." An aesthetic solidified around absence: the *Wire Sound* is waring.

One night, Gil's guitar strings all broke, and he retired to the front row of the audience, where he remained. Wire's first fan: "That period was incredibly quick," Newman continues.

We went from being not good enough to play the Roxy to being, you know on the Live At The Roxy album that was recorded by EMI — this all happened in weeks."

The Roxy compilation was recorded — in the field, as it were — by future Wire collaborator Mike Thorne, serving up a slice of anthropology, a look over the fence. Almost literally overnight, Wire were "being called in to EMI" and were soon signed. Did EMI think they were buying a certain type of 1-2-3-4? commodity? "There was certainly an element of that," Gilbert answers, but we insisted early on that we wanted to make an album, we didn't want to do a single. Right at the beginning we were playing slow pieces as well as fast pieces. The fast pieces tended to be very short because we'd edited out all of George's bits, so all the steady stuff was suddenly gone, and it was just reduced to this thing that might only last 45 seconds and went by in a blur. Basically what we could do was all start and stop together. It was all done with off-hand signals, was very bass led, and we did rehearse it a lot."

Lewis underlines this point: "It was really crucial, we really worked, we really rehearsed and rehearsed and rehearsed. We were always working."

Yet *Pink Flag* (1977) is one of those classic first albums that arrive from a complete nowhere (in both senses) like *Roy Music* or *Horses* or *Marquee Moon*. Each song sounds as if it first passed through a wind tunnel before reaching public air — a rigorous screening test which has removed all extraneous fill or decoration. Some songs are little more than motes, delivered at breakneck speed — which is not in itself odd as many groups tried to follow a Ranconic lead into speed blur and white out. What is singular is the range contained in these bulletin songs: sexuality, politics, revolution, topographies, media, the futility of having aims. At 28 seconds in toto, "Field Day For The Sundays" enacts its subject matter: tabloid zap, codified splinter. It's as though the men behind these songs had been concerned not with the transmission of any prevailing "gist" or urgent social truth ("I have the Truth / I know nothing") as Lewis berks with sardonic laughter) but with — objects. Objects in the world, or in a room. Song as object song as catalogue of objects. Song as aerial snap or satellite scan.

Gilbert recalls "Graham and I had this habit of sitting in pubs with notebooks and sliding them round like games of Consequences. Quite a big aspect of it was the joy of it — the joy of the Absurd — the collision of words and the way they sounded, you know? I think we took the words within the text quite seriously, and it wasn't. This is a Song About Something, it had to have several levels going on at the same time that kaleidoscopic, multifaceted view of life which actually is really in certain games. Life is like that."

The music Wire made in the first phase of their existence, between 1977-79, is one of the strangest legacies of a strange time. The Songs of this period are notable as much for what they avoid as for what they embrace. Notable for what they tellingly detour. What is left behind is a contraction of rock's inflated claims to social significance.

Gilbert explains: "It was a way of looking at the songs as if they were pieces of art or bits of concrete poetry. Quite a lot of them were big on reportage, in that they managed to convey the 'horror of reality

within a kind of objectivity.' Were Wire songs not so much played as edited into existence? "Editing is everything, yeah," agrees Newman. "I've always had a tendency to take liberties with the text as well — that comes of mainly not writing the text but writing the tunes, having tunes for lyrics, then grabbing a text and then just jamming it in willy nilly wherever it fits, truncating verses, turning ends of verses into choruses, picking up on one line and repeating it 17 times."

I recall something he said about loving new technology because it lets music of narrative trees it up? "That's one of my bugbears," he avows. "I'm a bit of an omnivorous person. Deconstructing narrative is one of my obsessions. I love the idea

that something doesn't have to be sequential. I would sometimes characterise a Wire lyric as being like a list: it's a series of unconnected items, certainly on the surface. People will always look for meaning anyway — you don't

have to steel meaning on stuff. Meaning is very often retrospective — you find the meanings and you find resonance. I do love that about sound and music — it goes its own way. It has emotional and intellectual resonances which I find very hard to find in other art forms."

Other 77 era music, in comparison, now sounds like the work of playground bullies — belligerent, bellicose, blustering. Wire were a single condensed drop of sulphuric acid, a single assassin's bullet, a single beautiful object in a bare room.

Four people in a room: Wire, fraying, circa 1979



From their experiences at art school, Wire didn't so much take an 'artiness' (as per later New Romantic pretensions) as a taste for concrete experiment. They were helped to a great extent by Wire's fifth member, producer Mike Thorne. Although he was an 'in-house' EMI choice, Thorne was partly responsible for the group's breakthrough moves into areas of synthesis and fracture, divergence and graft on *Chairs Missing* and 154. Newman remembers being in a rehearsal room, starting to play "Practice Makes Perfect" and everything suddenly fit. "The making of *Chairs Missing* was one of those moments when you know 'We were going very fast!'"

"The turning point for me was when that incredible wall of harmonics began to develop," continues Gilbert, "and I thought, 'Ah, this is going to be OK. I wouldn't mind spending a few years doing this. We took those kind of basic blocks that we had in *Pink Flag* and kind of literally shifted one item against another: that was how the music was constructed — in blocks — which went from being parallel to being shifted about against each other, which created some kind of angularity."

Gilbert had a background in tape manipulation, loops and drones. Did that help or was it a matter of starting from scratch? "Basically the job in hand was really to learn to play the guitar!" he laughs. "The link, I suppose, was the wall of sound" thing, where

you go from the song based thing to something more abstract where you can't figure out who's playing what. The harmonic wall of sound, powerful dynamics and almost complete changes of mood within one song."

Montage in music: music as montage. Cut 'n' paste before the sampled fact. New Wave as in Godard rather than The Police. If that was all there was to it, it would be easier to categorise them as just punk's token art school boys. But they gained a reputation for a cussedness bordering on sociopathy: a confrontational stance which meant Wire material sounded far bolder live than in the studio. Newman puts this down partly to a general mood — "some kind of neurotic edge underpinning punk" from the start, and that became increasingly pervasive. And potentially violent.

Gilbert adds, "There was definitely something in the air, a feeling that something was going to be destroyed here. Something that had lost its way, that was... not just the music, but on a cultural level — very sick and tired. There was a lot of fear."

"We kind of realised early on when we were touring the provinces in Britain that we were the Friday night entertainment," Newman remarks. "We were being poked and pushed, me especially, I was the focus for a lot of aggression. But actually, we actively pursued a lot of it."

Gilbert continues, "I think we had a vague air of impatience at the time: we wanted things to move, we wanted the context to move, wanted it all to move on a bit, and it wasn't, it seemed to be lagging behind, and the more behind it got the more extreme became our attitude."

This impatient attitude culminated in a series of experiments with gig form culminating in the infamous Camden Electric Ballroom night, as captured on *Document And Eyewitness*, where a perplexed audience who came for a last chance to hear "12XU" found themselves facing something out of middle Europe 1919. Experiments in object relations. Staged nonsequiturs. Dada drift. Not Dunderm Boys psychodrama. The stage directions read: "Vocalist attacks gas stove." "12 percussionists with newspaper headresses", blank scrolls are unrolled. "The strange thing is that such 'provocations' seemed to inflame the audience more than anything." "Sham 69 or Angels Upstarts could manage. Wire were heading out somewhere where there were no map refs."

Newman recalls: "The thing is that for the most part all the other Brit punk bands had basically turned into... well, rock, really, and we didn't want to do that."

By the time they released their last record for EMI, the "Map Ref 41N 93W" single, it was hard to know what to call the music they were making. Definitely not punk, and probably not rock. Tension and suspicion structured the group's remaining dealings with EMI. Nobody could quite decide on a pigeonhole for Wire anymore. Were they the next Pink Floyd? A New Wave chart group à la Eurythmics? Each side took the lack of a ready answer as an excuse to cut off relations. Newman says "We would do a single like 'Outdoor Miner' — which was a pop song —

and there would be huge consternation because EMI would be telling us they thought it wasn't long enough! Two and a half minutes wasn't 'long enough' to get played on the radio."

Ironically, if Wire were one thing sans doubt, it was a great singles group. The plaintive, poppy "Outdoor Miner", the manic glee of "Dot Dash" and the magnificent "I Am The Fly", which cracks open on seven seconds of one of the great guitar intros of all time. All this and an insect-metaphor croque of international Capital!

In November 1979 Wire played a four night residency at the Jeannette Cochrane Theatre, a multimedia event called *People In A Room*, which I attempted to review for the *NME*. Whatever their internal problems, Wire live had become a powerful, jaw-dropping experience. Rawness had become honed attack, choreographed, mightily measured — what Gilbert calls the "wild but controlled brutality" of their live sound. Newman



jerked and gestured like a dying stork in front of a music of unforgiving power and subtle undercurrents. It was nothing like anything else around at the time. But proffering a pin-sharp deconstruction of The Group The Gg was obviously the wrong gift for their paymasters. Gilbert continues, "EMI? They were absolutely incoherent. Having made the resources available to do this — instead of a showcase they got this experimental evening with a bit of Wire at the end."

Newman adds, "Obviously it was a kind of suicide note in a way, but it wasn't intended like that at all — we weren't trying to do anything to EMI. It just became a note." "It was our last chance," Gilbert cuts in, completing Newman's drift.

And then there was the post-Valentine's Day massacre of the Electric Ballroom, where they decided to go all the way out to the end of the line: to make a beautiful production of "the end of the group." It should have been as Gilbert puts it, "Wire doing a showcase in order to pick up another recording contract. We all knew that what we were doing, and what we wanted to do was so off message, it became so inventive that at the Electric Ballroom we almost invented a future Wire for that evening. And better to leave it at that — this Future Wire — than to try and present some cynical showcase."

"What characterises the 'Inkoleur' here is the fact that the lines of flight — create an inmovable aspiration for new spaces of liberty." — Felix Guattari

Wire were avatars of 'rhomatic' logic before their time — or rather, in their own time, and at their own pace. Denominations such as 'solo' and 'group' and 'career' became meaningless after a certain point. As if they seemed to realise early on (soon after that Roky support slot?) that it was being (in) a rock group that was unnatural, not splitting one up. In this way, we can see the lines opened up by their first 'split' as positive, not negative, releasing all these mine root systems and temporary autonomous zones. Walls down, new map refs cleared.

Fugitive figures — crossing the border. If they had never been a mates' group to begin with, then there was no real 'falling out.' Rather, it was like an experiment had reached its natural end, and the result could now be split off into three or four new directions. Such a quasi-scientific approach goes against rock's cherished 'gang' mentality. And unlike other groups where solo careers go no further than bad versions of R&B duos in the local pub, the early 80s saw a positive pourpour of solo work. Newman had three solo records out before the end of 1981. Gilbert and Lewis teamed up under such guises as Dome, Duet Enmo, Cupol PD. He Said and Gilbert. And Lewis. There was other work, too — record production, soundtracks installations — a maze of directions, suggestions, occasional dead ends before they all hooked up again in 1985 for a one-off with new material at the Oxford Museum of Modern Art. A new deal with Mute was signed soon after, and following the Snolekoff EP in 1986 they released an album a year for the next six years. Mute's Wire 1985-1990: The A List compilation is a good way into this block of new work.

Anyone worried that Snolekoff's popper aspects — a lighter, sleeker machine tooled sound — might erase the 'wildly brutal' side of Wire need not have worried. The best was yet to come. 1989's *The Drif* showcased Wire as a strict alchemical experiment, a flame monotonously tended, a momentum grabbed from the air and carried into several bands. "The Drif" is less a song than a sonic parchment viciously and repetitively subjected to a series of harsh treatments. It's also the thing the four

The short lived Wir trio, 1991



members get the most (private) pleasure from playing together, even as their audience splits between pro- and anti-Dn! factions.

"It was basically the keystone to starting up again," Gilbert asserts. "It was the most fundamental note that four people could make in a rehearsal studio. Here are the instruments — what do we do now? What do we want? What do we like? We like making a fairly simple brutal noise — and you couldn't get more basic than Dn! It's an open ended experiment, very physical, no key changes, just one rhythm and noises."

"One of Bruce's great 80s quotes was, 'There can never be enough Dn!,' Newman laughs. "The Drif album came out of, 'Why don't we just do a lot of different versions of the same piece?' But it isn't 'the same piece' in a way, it's a series of remakes."

"Or propositions," intercedes Gilbert. "It was straightforward. The proposition is what can you do with that premise? How far can you take that? How absurd can the instruments be, while keeping the same theme? It was a pure approach to the creative process."

As the 80s turned into the 90s, you never knew for sure if Wire was still a going concern, or Wire (either one-off Robert-free groupings), or any of the shadow groups and splinter projects. But they did finally disband again, and it seems to have done them all the world of creative good: the taste for "crossing the border/aching the menu" remains, both individually and collectively.

Newman's experiences as Swm label boss (with partner Malik Spagell) have heightened him again, following what was possibly a bit of a comedown from his Techno conversion. He admires the young post-Techno outfits he meets who never knew there were rockism rules you had to follow. So they don't. "And those are the sort of things that I like now — where things break down and you're really not sure what kind of music it is." He thinks (a Wire trait) that the guitar can never be exhausted, there's always another direction that hasn't yet been explored. He says, "The

Blimblin generation that's now in its early twenties, they've grown up with dance (like), they're not gonna be doing music their older brothers or dads did, they're gonna be doing something else. Reinventing the rock band in 95 different ways."

Gilbert registers a vote for 'strange hybrids' and modern hardliners like Farmers Manual. "They do play live like a band, but everything is Powerbook. They come from a generation who've never heard of Wire or Depeche Mode or whoever — their musical quotes come from completely different areas, not musical at all, much more to do with arcade games. It's almost academic... pure electronic noise that can be reproduced with digital processing — and to me that's really exciting."

Newman also carries a jagged enthusiasm for the barely tapped potential of crossovers and overlaps in the latest technologies. "CD based releases on which you can have music, you can have visual art, you can have music and visual art, you can have anything you want! Combinations of sound and picture with some kind of synergy, whatever! It's just so exciting," he concludes. In five years time this won't even be an issue for discussion? Pink Flap, Chairs Meaing and 154 are all available on EMI. Most other Wire back catalogue and solo projects are held on Mute and WRPD (Wire Mail Order). An official Wire Website has just gone online at www.pinkflap.com. Colin Newman's Swm label is at www.kleber.net/swm. A page devoted to Graham Lewis is at web.mit.edu/kleber/newlines.html. Wire perform at the All Tomorrow's Parties festival in April and three nights at London Garage in May.



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darkness invisible

Since severing connections with Cabaret Voltaire in the mid-90s, **Richard H Kirk** has remained in Sheffield to probe the underbelly of the electronic age, unravelling the codes that control the urban landscape.

Words: Ken Hollings.

Photos: Nik Strangelove



"For your safety this area is subject to closed circuit television surveillance." The city viewed from every dimension is in danger of disappearing altogether. It will ultimately cease to exist anywhere except as a two-dimensional electronic image, constantly erasing and replacing itself on the hours of video tape produced by the closed circuit surveillance cameras on every tower block and street corner. Up ahead's the foundry where they built Saddam Hussein's supergun," Richard H Kirk announces as he swings his car out into Sheffield's unhurried afternoon traffic. "They sent a film crew over from

*the States to make some TV movie about it." Empty clubs and railway buildings slide by. Scenes from the nuclear holocaust drama *Riverdance* were filmed here, amid the shells of Victorian buildings, in the old abandoned Royal Infirmary. "Afterwards the whole place was covered with bits of melted glass," he recalls. "We were shooting a Cabs video there at the time." For 25 years, from Cabaret Voltaire's earliest tape collages to the smooth surfaces and burnished Techno rhythms of more recent releases, Kirk has been creating music, either under his own name or a bewildering array of aliases, in these secluded, wind-searched enclaves. A line of ragged pink posters outside a locked and bolted theatre invites you to Dance Yourself Dizzy.*

It's hard not to think of the Grey Industrial North with such an overcast sky and rain slanting down the windshield. For Richard H Kirk, born and bred in Sheffield, they still spell home. "It's always been a good place to base yourself," he asserts. "I'm fortunate in so much as I'm able to travel quite a lot, going abroad to play music. I



love to travel when I have money, and it's a good base to return to. It's a good place to work because there's not a great deal else going on. If I moved somewhere else, it would probably be abroad."

Kirk has just returned from Nantes, France, where he took part in *Turn Of The Century*, a three day event sponsored by the French Ministry of Culture. "They've got this whole building there called the Biscuit Factory which they've turned into an arts centre and music venue. I was kind of into it because they had Jake Lieberzeit playing with Club Off Chaos and I fancied seeing him. I ended up on New Year's Day playing in this installation done up to look like an Indian Temple by these people from Germany called Genetic Drugs. The entire stage was covered in flowers. It was really something different. For some reason they asked me to play on the Indian night, even though I'm not particularly known for Indian-influenced stuff, but I wrote a couple of pieces to fit in with the evening."

Factor in last year's live set at London's ICA, in which he presented material from his forthcoming Touch CD *Logosonic* and the critically acclaimed sound warfare project called *Darkness At Noon*, plus a new Electronic Eye album coming out on his own Alphaphone label, and it's tempting to say that Richard H Kirk is back. Except that he never went away.

Inspired by a visit to Vienna, where Kirk was scheduled to perform in an electronic music festival at the height of the Kosovo crisis, the ugly, raw and angry eruption of sound that is *Darkness At Noon* conveys in the starkest terms possible the numbing compression of time and space that occurs in the information age. "Last year I felt like I went into combat mode somehow and was into doing some really aggressive music," Kirk asserts. "I got bored with things being too nice so I thought I'd try this instead, and it seemed to hit the spot with a lot of people. It's maybe reminiscent of some of the

older Cabs stuff from the late 70s. Someone compared it to "Blader Menhof". It's this notion of going back to go forwards. Take a step back and look at where you came from in the first place, then reapply that to now and see what happens."

Bunker archaeology

The barbed echoes of recent history reverberate around the room. Some of Kirk's earliest solo material can be found on *Disposable Half-Truths*, a C60 cassette first put out by Industrial Records in 1978 and subsequently reissued by The Grey Area Of Mute. "When we were doing the Cabs stuff in the early days, we were looking round for kindred spirits. We found Throbbing Gristle's *Second Annual Report* and started writing to Genesis P-Orridge. Originally, Industrial were going to put out the first Cabs material but they didn't have the money, so they persuaded Geoff Travis to do it, and we became mates. We travelled up to see TG play Wakefield Technical College, which must have been in 1978, and we found we had a lot in common. Then they asked me if I wanted to do something for Industrial."

Along with Steve Mallinder and third Cabaret Voltaire member Chris Watson, Kirk discovered that they shared some of Throbbing Gristle's central preoccupations with textual montage, subversive imagery and sound manufacture. Grating metallic tape delays and processed loops conveyed the sounds of static assembly lines inside industry's empty bunkers, vast interior spaces that had long since ceased to function economically.

"As far as I'm concerned 'Industrial' was a term Throbbing Gristle coined for their music, you know 'Industrial Music For Industrial People,'" Kirk groans. "We also got tagged with it by writers who just came up and thought, 'Sheffield industrial city'."



then put two and two together and perhaps made five. I don't dislike the term 'industrial', but it's not something we promoted as an identity. TG's Chris Carter was always way ahead of his time with sequencing and electronics. We always learned quite a bit from him. He always seemed to have the new toys before anyone else, like one of the first programmable beatboxes. It's funny when you look back. I remember the Cabs getting this Selma drum machine which we used on 'Nag Nag Nag', and it had a drum roll on it, which was a big deal at the time. People kept saying 'Oh, you've got a real drummer now?' No no no, we've got a machine that can play a drum roll."

Today, when every human resource is a commodity, the means of production have been relocated to areas less able to defend themselves. The Amazonian rainforest and the Third World poor are the new factories, while the former worker cubs increasingly exist only as sequences of electronic pulses, phantom entities without limit or dimension. Urban centres such as Sheffield, Chicago and Detroit became linked by these rhythms. By the latter half of the 1980s, heavy advances in audio technology saw Cabaret Voltaire giving up some bag time funk while on a collision course with the US underground dance scene.

When I first started hearing House music, I was mad for it," Kirk recalls enthusiastically. "I wanted to go and work in Chicago in '86, but for a number of reasons it wasn't possible. It was like a revelation, but it was also kind of unfortunate for Cabaret Voltaire because we'd just signed to EMI in '86/'87 and made the album *Code*, which we worked on with Adrian Sherwood, but the tempos were slow. Up to that time people were doing pieces at 100 bpm, then all of a sudden it was 120 bpm, and if you weren't at that House tempo, no one wanted to know."

With imagery derived from US paramilitary groups and police surveillance techniques, *Code* was a daunting work of propaganda: destabilisation and control. It urgently explored new lines of social defence outside the laws of production. The budging street rhythms found on *Black Jesus Voice* and the sampled exotica of *Ugly Sport* — Kirk's solo projects from the same period — opened up further new frontiers.

"I didn't feel that I was doing enough," he worries. "They only wanted you to do one record every few years and then spend all your time promoting it, which is tedious as far as I'm concerned. I like to do something and then move on. I found that I had a lot of time on my hands. *Black Jesus Voice* was probably more influenced by electro than by House. It was done over a couple of years in the mid-80s. I came out with *Ugly Sport* which was more Ambient without so many beats in it, and I thought it would be really nice to bring these two things out at the same time."

With its loose urban dance structures and terse reportage on Los Angeles gang life, *Black Jesus Voice* was far removed from House's jacked-up good times. This was hardly club music's usual wave your hands in the air like you just don't care stuff.

No, Kirk corrects. "It was 'blowing your fucking head off with a 9mm automatic' stuff. All that violent LA street gang stuff has been used a lot since then."

The lost dimension

Wednesday, June 1992. Another dancefloor located beneath another decentralised post-industrial city block. To get this far, you've had to pass through the kind of heavy duty metal detectors normally found at international airports. Once through an invisible electronic barrier, you're in a controlled social environment. Up on stage, Cabaret Voltaire are making one of their last live appearances. As the beats grow stronger, the group's visuals get heavier. The Rodney King beating is projected in grinding slow motion. Although it was seen throughout the world, the footage does not, in some senses, legally exist because it was ruled inadmissible as evidence. Slowed down, the complex reality of what we are witnessing becomes clear. The cops look as though they're dancing. Nightsticks are hefted and swung in time with the music. Date and time are magnetically encoded on the tape, as if the footage were taken by a police surveillance camera. To understand authority, you need the right code.

That's always been a big part of Cabaret Voltaire and a big part of me as well," Kirk states emphatically. "It's like journalism where you're showing stuff, not making any judgment, just putting it forward saying, 'This is what authority does to people.' Then like, cut it in with something else that renders the whole thing meaningless."

Echoes of King's routine brutalising were continued in the dialogue lifted from *My Only Life*, Jean-Pierre Godin's 1992 documentary on the lives of Sarno street

gang members in Los Angeles, and relocated within Cabaret Voltaire's "Low Cool"

"This was just before the LA riots and it all kinda came together," he continues. "It was really strange that we'd been using that material, and the next minute LA was in flames. I was collecting footage of all that from TV. There was one bit I saw where this guy was on the floor being shot. I only saw that once. It was withdrawn. I think it was so fucking brutal. Point blank."

The BBC also withdrew John Carpenter's *Assault On Precinct 13* from their schedules. Maybe that move together with James Cameron's *Terminator* contributed to media tales of kids leading armed attacks on at least one Los Angeles police station at the start of the riots. Hell, if Arnie can do it.

"What we see," William Burroughs noted in *The Invisible Generation*, "is determined to a large extent by what we hear."

The stripped-down, channelled sound of Detroit Techno underwent reappraisal in the early 90s, while Ambient, freeform strategies and dub structures took control of the chillout room. The term "Intelligent" was added to the existing Techno formulae. The low-impact stealth funk of tracks like "November X Ray Mexico" from Kirk's *Visual State* or the shimmering rhythmic patina of "Fourth World Destination" on his first Electronic Eye album, *Closed Circuit*, fitted the equation.

"The early 90s were quite good because we'd gotten away from EMI and started doing more experimental stuff again, which was a good way [for Cabaret Voltaire] to go out," Kirk says. "The last thing we did was *The Conversation* and there were no songs on that, and there was one 60 minute long track called "Project 80", which was as radical as anything we'd done 20 years ago as far as I was concerned. It could have gone on for several more hours because I was into these open-ended improvisations in the studio where I had basically constructed a cut-up of voices and bits of dialogue from films, which we ran in the studio and fitted music around it, a completely improvised thing. There were several loops running on the computer but they weren't being controlled by it. It was all done on the mixing board. *Dariness At Noon* was like that, an open-ended improvisation, which I stopped after 39 minutes."

In tune with his Detroit counterparts, Kirk kept up his recording momentum under a



"I find stuff that is evocative of the times we live in. Every politician is a lying fucker. I pick up on that. It's almost political, but it's not political"

number of aliases, including Sandoz named after the Swiss pharmaceuticals company that originally manufactured and marketed LSD, supplying the CIA with prodigious quantities of the drug in the 1950s. "I'd always admired George Clinton and Bootsy Collins," Kirk explains. "They'd got all these different bands on different labels, but it was always the same Parliament/Funkadelic mothership connection. That was always a big influence, and I kind of achieved that in 1994, which was my bag year. I had six different albums, including Cabaret Voltaire, spread across different labels. There was Electronic Eye on Touch, a Sandoz album, *Intensely Radioactive*. The *Conversation* on R&S, *Visual State* on Warp. At that time they were the two hippest labels in electronic music, and it was great. That was the year I peaked, and it's been downhill ever since," he laughs.

Speed and politics

Electronic Eye *Al Jabb* Sweet Exorcist. An individual viewed from every dimension is also in danger of disappearing. "I've now done five or six releases as Sandoz. There's been other things I've done as Nitrogen, Agents With False Memories." Like a character from a Burroughs novel, Kirk inhabits his own underworld, an invisible presence on a street you hardly notice. Emotions only exist as a series of influences.

"I mean a lot of people hate it because it's confusing your audience," he avers. "They

never know who the fuck you are, but then again maybe I don't either. Things don't take as long to do as they used to. Technology's definitely speeded things up, enabling me to do these different projects and make them all sound different. With *Neurometrik*, the new Electronic Eye CD, there's lots of different things flying in and out of the mix to counteract the fact that when you program stuff it can sometimes get a bit sterile and precise. So you've also got things that aren't controlled by a computer, they're just manually faded in and out, hence the mistakes and the delays. That's my attempt to bring in elements of chance and chaos into what otherwise could become very sterile."

Pre-recorded and found materials emerge from the mix on both *Neurometrik* and *Logostatic*, forming labyrinths of randomly intersecting texts and voices.

"I've been collecting 8 movies and documentaries for over 20 years so I've got a very big archive to draw upon," he explains. "I work my way through video tapes and select bits of the audio that have some kind of meaning, or that offer another meaning if taken out of context. It's like the Burroughs cut-up theory. Sometimes when I'm working, I'll have the TV running and just randomly drop some of that in, doesn't matter what it is, just for the hell of it. When you're working that way, things sometimes get buried in the mix so you don't hear them, and sometimes they jump out. It's quite hit and miss, and that's what I enjoy about doing something like "Project 80", it's a one-off. You could never repeat it. I employ a lot of that in my live stuff. Usually I'll operate three DAT players. Some of the material is rhythms, and I'll have one DAT tape which is just cut-up voices and then maybe another tape which is prepared electronics, then the whole thing becomes a mix fading between the different sound sources. *Neurometrik* is probably the nearest to a live set because that was done in a similar way. I'd written a lot of material, but the tracks were too long, so I bought a MiniDisc player and dumped it all onto that, then edited a cut on there. I don't know if anyone's ever done that before. I just set up a bunch of stuff on the disk, then faded things in and used effects. So what you end up with on *Neurometrik* is a 70 minute barrage of noise done in one take."

Technology enhances reaction times immeasurably. Set against the crisis in Kosovo, *Dariness At Noon* cuts into the spectral realities of modern electronic warfare by exploiting the disinformation techniques deployed by the media. Illusion is a revolutionary weapon. "I started listening to shortwave radio because I use it a lot for sound sources and I kept picking up snippets of conversations relating to the war," Kirk says. "There are also these weird frequencies just transmitting numbers

that have been going since the Cold War. These are stations that you can tune into and all they do is recite strings of numbers in robotic voices. Well, if the Cold War's supposed to be over, why are the voices still there? I incorporated some of that, looping these numbers as an improvisation piece in the studio. And it was pretty nasty stuff, a lot of slowed down shortwave. I remember being almost physically ill after I'd done it because the whole experience had been so fucking intense. I was shaking, you know. It was so abrasive. Also when I'm doing something like that I work at quite a high volume so you can imagine the kind of ear damage that's involved. A lot of the vocals on *Logostatic* were also taken from shortwave."

As with "Project 80", conversations are sliced together into a continuous interplay of new meanings and contexts, carried over from one track to the next. A news report on a Central American statesman fleeing his own country with a forged passport and bag full of cash recurs on "With False Identity" and "Monday Morning."

"I find stuff like that is so evocative of the times we live in," Kirk enthuses. "Everything's fucking corrupt. Every politician is a lying fucker. I pick up on that. It's almost political, but it's not political." Drug consumption has always maintained a strong economic presence within industrialised society. Soon it could be the only one

The South American cartels are already able to cover their own nation's debts through sales to the West. "They've now got better weapons than the US army," Kirk comments dryly. During the early days of Operation Desert Storm, Bolivian Trade Unionists called for a huge increase in cocaine production in order to help undermine the American economy. As if America needed that kind of help.

The aesthetics of disappearance

Is it possible to take the Rodney King video out of context, when the authorities themselves failed to provide one? If those cops really were dancing, would MTV show it? 'Gonillas in the mist' started out as the title of a movie, not a callous racial slur. Entertainment is assailed by the media, 24 hours a day. The electronic city remains a closed circuit. Signs and meanings feed back into themselves.

The voices of cops and militamen, scientists and shamans filter like ghosts through Kirk's music. Often their words are echoed and looped, so that they become superimposed, one upon the other. Neuro-politicians observe how the brain locates itself chemically in time and space. Pilots and weapons systems are fed flight coordinates. Old sci-fi movies and episodes from *The Outer Limits* and *Twilight Zone* offer glimpses of other existences now impossible to obtain. This is not about dreaming: science fiction has long since become a test site for products that haven't been invented yet.

"Right back to the Cabs, the whole of TV culture has been a very big source of material for me," Kirk comments. "I've made a career out of recycling stuff from TV for the past 20 years. If you're doing things on a more underground level you can get away with a lot, but if you're on a major label you can't because you have to get everything cleared and I'd hate that. It would be a nightmare. But then I don't tend to sample from things that are too obvious anyway."

The shift from the radical tape editing techniques of the late 70s to the digital dance strategies of today has also brought Kirk into contact with new audiences. Last November saw him performing his first DJ set at underground club Remedy's third

birthday party in Sheffield. Kirk is enthusiastic about the outcome.

"I cheated because I just had two MiniDisc players and a mixer," he grins. "It was all my own stuff. I was playing because I don't get much chance to hear it in a club situation. I think it confused people. Two thirds of the way through the set this guy came up to me and he was really disgruntled. He said 'Is it a chillout or not? What is it?' I was playing some of the stuff from *Loopstate*, which is quite hard, and I'd break it down, then go into some electronics. To my surprise I didn't clear the room out. People stayed for the two hour set. It was good. A learning experience. For the last couple of years I've been playing live and it's helped what I do in the studio quite a lot. When you're out there in front of an audience, you can see what works and what doesn't."

A strong influence over Kirk's music since the early 90s has been his fascination with African culture and the dense green worlds of South America and the Caribbean.

"I went to Haiti in 1991, which was a stupid thing to do," he recalls. "It was quite a scary experience because it was just before they had a revolution. Maybe I got possessed there or something, but ever since then I started using a lot of African voices and rhythms. It was so uplifting, I wanted to graft some of that onto what I was doing. There's a book Wade Davis wrote about his travels in South America, Columbia and Bolivia, meeting all the shamans. I'm fascinated by all that stuff and I love what he's into. I have this feeling that any disease on Earth, there'll be a cure for it out in the jungle. Unfortunately, we're still trashing the jungle and it'll all disappear."

The Earth's vanishing jungles seen from behind a rainswept window in Sheffield welcome to the 21st century.

"I was described as a cyber terrorist in one magazine and I haven't even got a computer," Kirk concludes, grinning. "I'm still working with the same basic kit I was using ten years ago. I still like messing around with the mixing desk and using old analogue synths in real time as it's going down onto tape, so you never know what's going to happen. I make my mistakes in public, stand or fall by that, and I want to keep putting out music whenever I'm excited by it. There's always new stuff coming along to send you off on another tangent." Electronic Eye's *Neuromatik* is out now on Aphogone. Richard H Kirk's *Loopstate*, released next month on Touch.



invisible jukebox

Every month we play a musician a series of records which they're asked to identify and comment on — with no prior knowledge of what they're about to hear. This month it's the turn of . . .

Bill Laswell

Tested by Peter Shapiro

A prime exponent of the cut 'n' mix aesthetic, with some 200 plus albums of genre shifting music as both producer and instrumentalist, Bill Laswell first came to prominence as the bassist in the avant-rock-jazz-punk-disco fusion group Material. With members Michael Beinhorn, Fred Maher and Fred Firth collaborating with everyone from Henry Threadgill and Billy Bang to Nile Rodgers and Whitney Houston, Material was the house band for New York's multicultural, hybridising avant-garde of the late 70s and early 80s. Laswell was also a member of Last Exit, alongside Sonny Sharrock, Peter Brötzmann and Ronald Shannon Jackson, with whom he churned out some of the most explosive music ever made — free jazz as nihilistic punk rock. Hooking up with the Celluloid label, Laswell worked with pioneering hip-hopsters like Grand Mixer D.ST and Fab Five Freddy, African artists such as Youssou N'Duro, Mandingo Griot Society and Fela Kuti, and with Herbie Hancock, he created the monumental "Rocket". Laswell's appreciation of hip-hop and new technology, and his willingness to jump across generic boundaries, not to mention his identifiable sound, made him a much in-demand producer during the mid-80s. His credits include Laurie Anderson, Mick Jagger, Yoko Ono, Ryuichi Sakamoto, The Ramones, Iggy Pop, and P.L. He hasn't changed his peripatetic ways and has continued to work with just about everyone from Boosy Collins to John Zorn. The Jukebox took place in London.



HERBIE HANCOCK SEKTET

"Be What" from *Live 1971* (Blue Jazz)

[Johans] I have no idea.

It's Herbie Hancock.

I was going to say it's like...

Section. Where's it from?

It's from a 1971 bootleg which was given away with an *Rolling Stone* magazine some years ago.

So that's the sextet with [puncher] Eddie Henderson?

Yes, plus Buster Williams and Billy Hart. How did you come to work with Herbie on "Rockit" and *Future Shock*?

A guy that was working with him who worked for [executive producer] David Rubinson was coming to New York and was looking around for people who were doing different things. He had a big fascination with Brian Eno and he made the connection that I had just worked with Eno, so I was then interesting to him. Through him, I agreed to assemble two tracks which I just put together rather quickly with a DJ and Daniel Ponce. We took the tracks out to LA, one track was called "Earth Beat" and the other was "Rockit". They were pretty much finished except for big playing.

And what about the scratching?

The way that worked was I went to Bambaataa and said, "I'm doing this thing for Herbie. Who do you think is a really good turntable player who can play in time?" He said, "Why don't you get Whiz Kid? So I approached Whiz Kid, I think he was moving or joining the army or something impossible at the time. He said he couldn't but his protégé, this guy called Cheese — I didn't know him at the time, plus I thought it was a weird name. Cheese, I don't know if he'll get it. Anybody else? So he said, "DST," and I already knew DST, so I used him [put together ideas and concepts and he would sort of embellish them.

WORD OF MOUTH featuring DJ CHEESE

"Coast To Coast" from *Best Of The Old School* (Strictly Bizness)

This is from the early 80s, right?

Yeah.

I know this record. I've heard it before.

It's actually DJ Cheese with a group called Word Of Mouth.

Oh, it's Cheese. I didn't know anything about him at the time. A lot of DJs that I meet now really like him.

How did you get into Hip-hop?

I started doing records and playing before there really was a Hip-hop, it hadn't really happened yet. So I was doing beat-orientated music and everything from improvised to rhythmic music with improvisation on top of it, and that's around the same time that Sugar Hill came out, that Kurtis Blow came out, and that was everybody's introduction to rap. There was a period where it quieted down and everybody thought that it was just a fluke thing that wasn't going to catch on at all. Around that time I met the guy from Celluloid

Records, who commissioned me to do five records. DST, Fab Five Freddy, Phase 2, all that kind of stuff. Right around that time Afrika Bambaataa & The Soulsonic Force's "Planet Rock" and Grandmaster Flash And The Furious Five's "The Message" came out, and it became official that this was going to stick. It was before the word "HipHop" had spread out of the Bronx and out of New York, and we got in on the beginning of it.

How was it working with them?

Well, it was fun. It was good because it was my introduction to working with DJs, which is really a science. They're very thorough people. We were very conscious of records. I had a very big collection, but Bambaataa had like 30,000 records, just walls and walls of them. That was very impressive because that was our source where all the music is going to come from, from the vinyl. At that point I started to really obsessively collect vinyl with DST. When Herbie's record came out and it did well, we got a car and made a trip through the South and bought old vinyl. It was through working with DJs that I got motivated to hear more music and to buy more vinyl and get more information. It was definitely a DJ influence. In the same way now, turntables are influential in that they are any instrument and you'll hear combinations that are a lot more inspiring than a guy who's just playing one instrument. It's still a big influence.

Are you still collecting vinyl?

No, not any more. I still have some, but I got rid of most everything.

FUNKADELIC

"Alice In My Fantasies" from *Live, Meadowbrook, Rochester, Michigan* (Westbound)

[Immediately] Something to do with Funkadelic?

Yeah.

Eddie Hazel is playing. Is this an obscure thing or is this a record?

It's from 1971. It came out a couple of years ago.

Yeah, I've got that. I don't have it memorised, but I've got it. I got a lot of bootlegs of theirs in Japan one time.

Were you still in Detroit when they were around?

Yeah, I lived in Ann Arbor when they were doing live stuff. It was very common to see outdoor gigs with them and The MCs playing together. There was an afterhours underground small club in Detroit called Sony Sadie's that was directly across the street from the Masonic Temple, and Funkadelic would play there when they were still rock like this, more acid rock, doing really psychedelic stuff, long things with Eddie and Tiki [Fulwood] and Billy Bass [Nelson].

How did you get connected with them?

I guess the first person was Bernie [Worrell] who I think I met working on the Nona Hendryx record [her self-styled debut], which was even before the Herbie record, like BO or BL. He played on some stuff and I gradually reconnected with him and, through him, later [Funkadelic guitarist] Mike Hampton. Let me on Bootsy [Collins] got signed to Arista and I got called to work on a project with Arista. Once I met Bootsy, that triggered George [Clinton] and everybody

How have their ideas influenced your stuff?

Well, it's a lot of different people doing very specific things. All those rock riffs that they do is really Eddie and Billy Bass, and the way Tiki Fulwood played drums, that's a concept, but it was the invisible styles that made it. A lot of people are influenced by that feel and the way they created those riffs, it's a very special way of playing. The things Bernie did are a huge influence on how modern R&B and Hip-hop are put together. George is more of a concept and word guy and Bootsy is more of a character. There are so many different aspects to that stuff that you can't say any one thing influenced you to do anything in particular. Then there's the masks and deconstruction which produce results like "Maggot Brain", which wasn't meant to be a guitar solo — it was a track with drums, bass, everything — but everybody was kind of falling apart. George had to make a record, he just pulled it out and it became this Ambient piece which is a classic. It was meant to be a song though, but when you have people laying on the floor instead of playing, you tend to — Eddie was the only one playing. It was his moment of clarity.

LOVE CRY WANT

"Love Cry" from *Love Cry Want* (New Jazz)

Is the keyboard player the artist?

Sort of, yeah.

A lino? From the 70s? Some influence from Lifetime, it sounds like.

The keyboard player did play with Tony Williams.

It sounded like the guy was copying Larry Young, but I didn't recognise it.

It's Love Cry Want, a recording featuring Young, recently unearthed by the drummer here, Joe Gallivan.

What attracted you to the whole black rock, noise, fusion kind of thing?

I don't know. That's the music I was around when I was growing up. Lifetime to me was the most important improvising rock band, and it really was a rock band. I just remained Turn It Over by Tony Williams. Lifetime and found about 20 minutes of outtakes and stuff that weren't on the original record. I never thought of them as sort of black or noise or anything. I just thought it was really strong, especially Larry Young, I thought he was amazing. And Tony, of course.

How did the Miles Davis remix project, *Pantheology*, come about?

I approached Sony and Miles's manager who is now curating Miles's estate. Around 1969 a lot of consideration wasn't necessarily given to the fact that jazz records started to sound thinner, smaller and less detailed with less dimension, while rock records started to sound fuller, bigger with bottom end and a bigger picture. That's what Miles was listening to, he certainly wasn't listening to jazz. He was listening to Sly and Herbie and different things that started to sound bigger and better. I always thought it was too bad that he didn't have the potential to make his records sound bigger and fuller. Teo Macero was making the majority of decisions in terms of editing and putting the records together, and he was very much on the payroll of

invisible jukebox

Columbia. There's always been this concept that Two and Miles were creating this music. I don't agree with that and I talked to Miles and he didn't agree with that either.

WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS

"The Last Words of Dutch Schultz" (private tape)
[Immediately] Well, it's obviously Burroughs. "The Last Words of Dutch Schultz" I don't remember this.

This was originally released with some literary imagination.

Why is he such a big influence on you?

People always see Burroughs as the subversive character or as the godfather of punk or the homosexual junky. I always saw him as someone who really predicted all these things that came later, who was very concerned with how people were manipulated by control. A lot of what he said was really full of hope and he had this really shamanistic quality in that way. A long time ago he touched on a lot of different points that we're dealing with now. I'm not following the books and I'm not saying William Burroughs is a great book writer, but he also would agree with I thought his life was interesting and the things he said were really vital, and still are.

What about the cut-up thing?

Cut-ups existed before that. Just finding results with random processes. I don't really dwell on that side so much. We do that with tape all the time. I think that would have happened with or without Bron Gyan [the artist who introduced the method to WSB]. It's an interesting way of arriving at a result. He wanted to expose certain systems or mechanisms or ways of manipulating and controlling. His thoughts on control are vital and that's very important.

MATI KLARWEIN & PER TIERNBERG

"Afrodite" from *Mo Man's Land* (Rub-A-Dub)

I know the voice somehow, but it's not a known narrator. It's a known painter. It's Mati Klarwein. Who could have guessed that? I actually have this, though. That's why I remembered the voice.

You work quite a lot with visual artists. ...

Yeah, there's a connection with all of that. There's the sensibility whether it's film or writing or painting or sound or music. Listening, there's a connection with everything. Questions and answers always seem to be based on definition. The question is, "What's the connection?" There doesn't have to be a question, there's already a connection. The question and the answer are already connected. We could mess around with words, but it's already there, it's already connected. Mati was important too. The work he did was great. I'm sure it still is. I met him about four or five years ago.

Why do you think it was important?

Well, I was inspired by it. There was a lot of detail. I could see why musicians like Miles and Santana would be inspired to use it for covers. A lot of images colliding a lot of detail, a lot of unexpected images. I think it showed where his head was at, which was a pretty big space at the time. It could anticipate there were some drugs involved.



JOHN COLTRANE

"Living Space" from *Infinity* (Impulse!)

I know this sound. I know the sax player, but I can't remember. Is that a violin?

There are some strings, yeah.

I mean the concept is like

Ornette, but obviously the horn is not. The horn is

Albert Ayler?

It's John Coltrane.

I haven't recognized that. Something about the tone didn't sound like Coltrane. Maybe it's the recording.

Alice Coltrane overdubbed strings after his death.

I know that record, yeah. I wouldn't have recognized that. It's obviously a Coltrane influenced sound, but I wouldn't have recognized it as him, the tone was too thin. Maybe that's just the way it sounded. The tone's not warm enough. But I actually like this record.

What else did *Infinity* jazz purists ...

Oh yeah. This is a great record for jazz purists. Totally dense, chaotic strings.

The audacity of over-dubbing 'the legend'.

Well, yeah, I think if you're married to the legend, you have more of a right than just someone who sits around and listens to his records and never met him. I mean, why not? And the stuff she did was really out, the strings.

It's linked in a way to *Pantheisme*. How much Black have you received for that?

You know, you got good and bad reactions on everything. There were a lot of good reactions and I actually sold very well. It triggered some new interest in the catalogue and it put him in a different place. All you have to do is get a really good sound system, play that CD and play the originals. It's everything I was saying before about fullness and size and clarity. And I know Miles would have been happy with that. That's the most important thing. What was negative was that it didn't immediately insulate on doing a remix record of a remix record.

FELA KUTI

"Gentleman" from *Gentleman* (Barclay)

Is this a very bad *sofaphone* player that could be related to Africa somehow? Could it be Fela?

Was it the bad notes that gave it away?

No, I knew it from the beginning, but I was trying to figure it out. I kept picturing some Chicago guy or something.

What was working on *Army Arrangement* like?

He was getting on a plane from Lagos to come to New York and I was going to work with him. The idea was to mix this record that he had recorded here, I think, in London with Dennis Bovell. On the way from Lagos, he was carrying a lot of cash, so they detained him and put him in prison. The tapes arrived without the artist which is always better if you're doing a remix [laughs]. That should be put in your contract in future, that the artist should be in jail while you're doing the mixing [laughs]. That's a very 80s kind of thing. I got the tapes and I thought they were pretty bad in every way. Just like in home playing, you can say what you want about politics and Africa and 30 wives, but it's just shit *sofaphone*

playing. So I immediately did what I would normally do which was to add something that would make it stand out a little more which at the time was Sly Dunbar and Bernie Worrell, who I thought played great on the record, replacing a lot of Fela's parts, and Aylo Oeng, a Senegalese guy who played really simple hand drums. It was not meant to be taken too seriously. It was just a job clean it up and put it out, whatever. I was pretty happy with it, but Fela freaked out because it's not his music, it's not African music. Who cares? It was a job. If someone sent me the tapes again tomorrow, I'd probably do the same thing. He said some weird things and I probably said some weird things back. It's irrelevant. It was a job. It was a pretty bad recording of not so inspired music, which we made an effort to make listenable. It's all down to perspective and intuition and what you do in the moment.

Are you aware of how hip he's become in the last year?

Yeah, I know they've re-released all the stuff. Fela was important and there was a moment when he had a good band, too, in the 70s. He was important, definitely. I just think that a lot of it doesn't translate in terms of musicality. He suffered a lot. I know his whole history. I think he probably gave a lot of encouragement to Nigerians and Africans in general. In terms of black culture, he's very outspoken. He didn't take shit from people and I think that was probably an inspiration. I think he got his initial interest in that kind of sensibility from being in the States and being around the Black Panthers and Angela Davis. I think when he was here, he was trying to be a trumpet player, trying to play jazz, which obviously would never happen. So it was good that he found something to say with the music. Take the rhythm and say something on top of it and I think that translated the message.

How do you respond to people who criticize the kind of remodelling work you did on Fela's music?

You can't think about what people say. I mean what the fuck does somebody know about what I did with Fela? That was a job. What did I do with Fela? I did \$100,000 with Fela. That's my business. I don't care what people say about shit. I've done enough things, they can't hate everything and they can't like everything. Who cares anyway? It doesn't make a difference.

What about Paul Simon's brand of 'global collaboration'?

To me, the Paul Simons, the Peter Gabriel, the David Byrne, they weren't always interested in that kind of music, that music came to them later. On their way to Brazil or to Africa or wherever and take an instrument and set down and collaborate. They can't go and play music. That makes what they do appropriate, not collaborating. I never looked at it in that way. I always looked at it like I'm interested in travelling, most of my best friends are from different cultures, we all play music together, we don't have any tricks, don't have any hype, we just stand on the stage and play music together and that's different. I feel like I'm collaborating with people who've built long relationships with over a long period of time. I've helped them get into other situations by doing that. That's OK. That will continue into the future on different planets, I hope.

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sound check

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Robert Ashley

String Quartet Describing The Motion Of Large Real Bodies
ALBA (AMERICAN PLAINS) 407090-1 CD

Robert Ashley says that *String Quartet Describing The Motion Of Large Real Bodies* is the "potential orchestra" for an opera based on the text of *The Song Menorah: Chest And Berenice* from *More Men And Women by Americans* poet John Barlow Wojanow. A simplified version, with one voice and synthesized orchestra, has appeared on record, but it was never completed as a score.

This is a predictably strange concept from the Cage-influenced electronic composer. *The String Quartet* itself composed and recorded in 1972 in a version by Ashley and colleagues uses an electronic orchestra of 42 sound-producing modules, activated by the performance of the string ensemble. The modules pump aren't specified because

Ashley knew that the resolution in electronic instrumentation would render instructions rapidly obsolete. But he did have this advice for the string players: "The bow is drawn continuously but so slowly and with such great pressure on the string that the string responds in randomly occurring single pulses." A single direction of the bow may take ten minutes. "These sounds go directly into a set of four loudspeakers but are delayed electronically, then activated by the coincidence of an original sound and its delay. With 42 electronics players this is meant to produce an unimaginable variety of sounds."

The "unimaginable variety" is here limited to only one string player and a much reduced electronic format. The same grating grinding pizzicatos, rendered staccato and sporadic with minimal changes, feature throughout in 20 minutes. Two versions of *How Can I Tell The Difference?* use the *String Quartet* as an orchestra to similar effect but with more development. Reverb and motorcycle sounds raise the first version to boring intensity before fading. The second substitutes artificial reverb. It hardly makes for pleasurable listening but is certainly unique.

ANDY HAMILTON

Oren Ambarchi

Isolation
NOUVEAU REPERTOIRE CD

Like his peers Plan, Don Roberts, James Pickett, Francis and Penman, Sydney-based artist Oren Ambarchi's work is rooted in an exploration of the guitar. Eschewing its popular

usage, Ambarchi re-routes the instrument into a zone of alien abstraction where it's no longer easily identifiable as itself. Instead it's a laboratory for extended sonic investigation. *Isolation* is a well-focused, neatly wired work that falls somewhere between the concrete constructions of Tad Dickelander and the abstract soundscaping of Ron Sonic or the Hago crew. Each track is a self-contained entity evolving less linearly from ductilely layered dishes to eerie, soloistic incursions even as it goes along with its neighbors. Most surprising is how Ambarchi avoids any form of computer processing or editing.

Dense with activity, "Study No. 3" consists of manic, obsessively layered bursts of sound splinters and shards of punctuation exploding across one another in a brilliant riot like a roomful of chaining self-activating electronic toys, or choppy strings of code being pulled from the ether. Avoiding repetition,

Ambarchi's spatial awareness is impeccable. "Smor" straps an assortment of carefully processed events around a series of spaces while "Lunge" forms a clever collage of ticked-groove clicks, bleeps, bassy tone bursts and background fanny.

With plenty of low end activity, the album has a particularly visceral impact. Waves and sneezes of heavy bass wash against the body or burst outward in sudden shuddering jets. Drones descend and spiral upwards as trants while the layers of micro-activity bubble and burst against the skin.

DAVID HOWELL

A Silver Mount Zion

We Has Jest Us Alone But Shalla Of Light Sometimes Chase The Corners Of Our Rooms
CORNER (LONDON) CD

A Silver Mount Zion are a primarily instrumental trio which includes members of Goodspeed You Black Empire! ("We Has Jest Us Alone" consists of two extended pieces divided into four movements with titles like "Lonely As The Sound Of Lying On The Ground Of An Airplane Going Down").

Stylistically there are obvious similarities with Goodspeed, such as the cracked voices of the doom-feld recordings fitting in and out of the mix, and a slanted taste for epic, melodic bombast. However, the trio's slow-moving instrumentalism is more emotionally charged with a melancholy warmth for humanity.

The nucleus of their sound comes from long, droning piano chords, contrabass and weeping strings, often invoking the sad ethereal

spaces of Polish composer Henryk Górecki. The real surprise given the company they keep is the presence of two pieces with actual sung vocals. The best, "How Never Made" recalls the cracked low growl of New York's circa 1970s The Night and On The Beach. Vocalist Brian Stearns and emotes convincingly enough to give weight to poetically crazy lyrics like: "Let our words be led on iron gas and plate glass/ Cause the people understand it's a wonderful thing." His voice's promise of deliverance raises the album above mere doom-mongering and points the way ahead for *Consolation's* inextricable sounds.

DAVID KEenan

Derek Bailey & Susie Ibarra

Dialect
NUEVO REPERTOIRE CD

Derek Bailey & Steve Lacy

Outcome
NUEVO REPERTOIRE CD

Occasionally Derek Bailey's guitar playing pursues a logic of the unfolding moment, with little evident regard for the other musicians present. It's as if he believed synchronicity of performance were enough to establish some form of coherence, or perhaps he disregards coherence as a musical prerequisite. On the live album *Outcome* from Paris in 1983 and on *Outcome* recorded in London last February his responsiveness is indisputable, although of a different order on each.

On *Dialect* his close attention to Ibarra's fragile percussion is audible in the chiming harmonics, strangled notes and damped chords interlarded through her rhythmical tracery. Bailey plays electric guitar with striking use of the volume pedal, swelling and reducing his sounds to complement Ibarra's refined dynamic shifts. Some of his best recorded work has been in duet with percussionists. Jamie Muir on *Dark Drug* (1981), John Stevens on *Playing* (1993), Gregg Bendure on *Buried* (1995), and Tony Oxley on *Solo Saxes* (1997) not to mention his regular theatrical encounters with Hans Bennink. *Dialect* ranks with the best of these.

The meeting with saxophonist Lacy is more of a contest, in the sense that each participant guardedly preserves their individual voices in ways that do not immediately suggest mutual complicity. A certain amount of hesitancy but determined pockmarking for pole position takes place as

Bailey, again on electric guitar, grows restless, accompanying Lacy's jazz-infused musings and heads off at a tangent. A veteran of Bailey's Company sessions in the late 1970s, Lacy shows willingness to push his soprano into alien terrain, but he soon gravitates back to the meticulous melodic idiom that suits him best. The divergence is rather less great than on Bailey's encounter with Lee Konitz; rather more than on his dates with Anthony Braxton. And the same tensions that arise from their respective assumptions also enable the shadow of coherence to take form here.

JULIAN COWLEY

Broadcast

The Noise Made By People

WASP WAP65 CD

Broadcast

Extended Play EP

WASP WAP129 CD

Housed in a faux-Saul Bass sleeve design, Broadcast's debut album proper invites accusations of arch retro- fixation, particularly as the music warms up with an opening salvo of appropriated Joe Meek/John Barry motifs. Haven't Pram already done cult pop with a twist of kitsch? Whatever, with its ghostly keyboards and a quivering otherworldliness worthy of Hammer horror, Broadcast's instrumental third track "Minus One" is undeniably very like Pram. It might take a few listens, but gradually Broadcast's own identity seeps through the cracks. Fittingly for a Warp group, they parallel their invigorated John Barry scores with their loop, sample, and drone experiments. They exploit those methods with real finesse on the album's closing track "Dead The Long Year", and again on "Belly Dance" from the Extended Play EP. Irish Keenani's vocals carry an air of wistful detachment but occasionally hint at darker things, as on the harsh "You Can Fall".

The Noise Made By People plunders the anti-rock musical heritage of the TV and film themes that fed off the 60s pop explosion as well as the half-forgotten Britpop era preceding The Beatles. But Broadcast distance themselves from such sources, transforming them into something strangely modern.

TONY RIDGE

Tim Buckley

Wonder In Progress

SWAN WADP145 WADP145 CD

Tim Buckley was a Griffin White Horse upon whom few were able to join their hopes for any length of time. He made nine studio albums before his premature death in 1975, but he never made the same one twice. His extraordinary musical octave range and unique longform melodic sensibility, set him apart from other hippy-era singers. Buckley's better work has resisted aging and continues to amaze. His revival has been long overdue, remedied somewhat by the early 90s reissue programme of his later catalogue (though the latest, *Enigma*, went under shortly thereafter), and the subsequent discovery of content tapes from London's Queen Elizabeth Hall and LA's Troubadour. Additionally, *Enigma* (which caused Buckley's first four albums) begins its reissue programme with the ornate *Goodbye And Hello*, his sophomore album which remains



Show of hands: Otomo Yoshihide reviewed page 55



Asian Dub Foundation

Community Music
LONDON E63320 CD/UP

Asian Dub Foundation reach a vast multicultural constituency of *Juneteers*, punks, radical politicos and fans of rap and reggae. Apparently music critics too — their last album, *Raji's Revenge*, was shortlisted for the Mercury Prize. The music itself melds into a good humoured, high energy mix of speeding breakfasts and reggae basslines, distorted guitars and rap poetic, sketches of Indian movie music and serious political intent. One of the most successful tracks on the new album is "Colour Line", which features a radical winter Ambassador Sivanandan condemning the plundering of the Third World over a spacious dub beat, festooned with scraps of melody on Indian instruments.

British Asian pop has recently come a long way in a short time. Commonwealth's independent stance was rewarded with chart success, and now ADF, scrounging from everywhere to construct their own fusion, are pushing to the next level. ADF's appeal is simply that they have so much to say about Britain right now, both in the torrent of angry lyrics and in their explosive musical miscegenation. One of the very few groups currently engaging directly with political matters, they castigate the "shoeboxer notion, forever looking backwards" on the new single, "Real Great Britain". Elsewhere, their songs tackle the corruption of police "cointain culture" and the stock market's pride before a fall. Another favourite ADF subject is embodied in the title "Collective Mode". The title of *Community Music* refers to the music education body, founded by improvising drummer John Stevens among others, in which ADF had its original roots as a workshop and later a sound system. They now lead their own education projects, ADFED and the younger rap group Invasion.

The new album builds well on *Raji's Revenge*, with a sharper production and more variety. The closer, "Scaling New Heights", is a sublime instrumental in seven beat time, lively enough in itself but a chillout by ADF standards. Musically, however, not everything stands up to close inspection. A few songs follow dull rock guitar chord patterns, and some of the Asian elements have been tacked on for a bit of colour. Occasionally the group falls into the trap of being politically radical but musically conservative. At a bulging 70 minutes, the album is too long by a couple of tracks. But a song like the ecstatic "Taa Deem", their tribute to Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, recalls well the enveloping euphoria generated by the group onstage.

CLIVE BELL

very much an acid folk period piece. Its success was deeply unintended by its author, a gifted 20 year old conman.

Recently discovered unreleased studio recordings of Ten Buckley are now available through this release, available only via Rhino Handmade's Website. Beautifully packaged, with extensive notes by Buckley guitarist Luke Underwood, *Works in Progress* offers a taste that is new by strict definition: earlier alternative versions of songs from his third album *Happy/Sad* and 1970's *Blue Afternoon*. But these takes afford insight into Buckley's generative thinking. Songs like *Hippy/Sad's* "Love From Room 109 At The Islander (On The Pacific Coast Highway)" are revealed as products of grafting and careful reduction.

Works in Progress finds Buckley on the run from *Goodbye And Hello's* orchestrations and studio sleight of hand. These versions reveal him in the process of fine-tuning the jazz-inflected, small ensemble settings which would characterise his next few albums. David Friedman the vibraphonist added to Buckley's group hours before a New York date, is heard on ten tracks. The phrase "Like honey in the sun" ("Buzzer" Fly) is a perfect description of what Friedman's mallets added to the music.

Dating back to his folk troubadour period — when he debuted it on the final episode of *The Monkees* TV, singing in front of a demolished car — "Song To The Sun" unsurprisingly stood apart from the free-metre, multitracked vocal improvisations of Buckley's largely ignored *Sonata* (1970), where it eventually appeared. *Works in Progress* contains the first recording of this black romantic gem with Buckley parsing the lyrics "Where you have when I was lost?" as many a 60s folk singer might. The strophetic howling came later.

RICHARD HENDERSON

Mira Calix

One On One
WARP 04773 CD

Mira Calix is the alias of Chantal Passamonte. Warp's former press officer, and one of the brains behind Telethon's first early Ambient parties. Following two previous singles, her debut album *One On One* is a worthy effort.

"My Heart", a collaboration with Seelbach's Mark Clifford, opens things well enough. Foggy crackling layers of jazz form a mesmerising haze of blurred frequencies that recede in wailing trails of guitar feedback. "Skin With Me" is an excellent, punchy piece of electronics with webs of rhythm flickering restlessly about a dominating beat spasm and loops of iron-fungus breathing. Here and elsewhere, Passamonte utilises a kick sound cloaked in reverb like a muffled body blow, orbited by insectile chatter.

Numerous tracks work through modes of repetition, attempting to construct a cyclical tension. But they often fail to truly connect as they linger and outstay their welcome. Many built a backing texture from processed fragments of Passamonte's own vocals, which

are chopped and looped into phrases and layers of breathy sighs. "Somewhere" offers a plodding, repetitive melody, elsewhere keyboard melodies are noticeably weedy.

Cut back to the seven or eight essentials, this would have been a far more palatable album, but at 16 tracks, it's cluttered with fillers and sketchy experiments. By Warp's high standards, the very average *One On One* is a disappointment.

DAVID HOWELL

Coil

Astral Disaster
THRESHOLD HOUSE L00014 CD

In-spiral intoxication, alchemical transmutation, enema energy, psychic phase changes — Coil's reputation rests on their application of the processes that occultists, pilgrims and visionaries apply to the soul and body to sound. *Astral Disaster* the CD (reissue of a limited edition LP 1991 copies), seems at first to be a characteristically hermetic take on the same themes. You need to dig deeper to find something perhaps more domestic in its concerns.

If opener "The Anaxaris" is a brief psychodrama of crooked and chaotic myth abuse, it's also John Balance's attempt to reconcile childhood memories of watching *The Quatermass Experiment* on television. The heartbreak shudder and slow summer of "The Mothership And The Fatherland" is as much a reiteration of mythic tales of revenge as Coil's suggested attempt to explore the cosmic connection between flying saucers and Kabbalah. Truncated glossolalia and the mirror-cracked voice of Kate Bush bring it to a close, hinting perhaps at a connection between childhood trauma and alien abduction hallucinations. Less obvious interpretations would be preferred.

Reading too much into Coil's music is never a problem, although it's far to say that travellers unwilling to apply their own imagination may well find *Astral Disaster* less rewarding. On one level, "The Sea Priestess" is a weird, spacey wash of vibrant quackles, a plinking ocean of hymnal sound on which Balance's surrealised intention sets sail. Partially written while experimenting with an Android singing mirror, the piece can be taken as a pure mutation from the subconscious, or even as a cryptic metaphor (complete with occasional pseudo-whale noises) for the effects of ocean-borne pollution. "Mu-Ur" reveals the same ponderous, seascape, with Balance's voice electronically furnished to speak on behalf of the priestess herself. Other moods — an obsessive musical box, satirical metal cues — emerge from the sea before odd transformations lead to one more peaceful soundscape.

If "The Sea Priestess" and "Mu-Ur" are the album's lengthy highlights, shorter tracks such as "I Don't Want To Be The One", about Balance's uneasiness to persist and sometimes unattractive visions, are on a more

inmate scale. The ability to connect the cosmic to the personal, as if they were the same experience, is one of Cori's stronger points. *Acid Disaster* may not be instantly impressive — it certainly benefits from a wider knowledge of their interests than the sleeve provides — but it's worth taking the time to grow with and appreciate it. They remain one of Britain's treasures.

MIKAL DUGGIE

Loren MazzaCane Connors

Uncompromised Acoustic Guitar
Improvisations Vols 1-8 1979-1980
KSTANC V084101DP11-14 4RO

Kath Bloom & Loren MazzaCane Connors

Kath Bloom/Loren MazzaCane Connors 1981-1984
METALOG RECORD CO

Referred to by Loren MazzaCane Connors as the Daggett Sisters because they grew out of a period in the 70s when he was living in a rundown art studio on Daggett Street in New Haven, Connecticut, Uncompromised Acoustic Guitar Improvisations repackages his earliest musical releases, most of which were released at all first time round. The company he was dealing with New York's New Music Distribution went bust without setting any of his LPs. Unable to bring them home, MazzaCane was forced to dump the lot. So this boxed set, compiled by writer Bryan Coley and Thurston Moore for the guitarist's 50th birthday, is effectively its first outing.

Across four CDs — comprising the eight original volumes (each consisting of a single improvisation) and a previously unissued session — MazzaCane brushes and twangs the strings, or warms them with some manner of bottleneck, in a trance-like manner while mourning in a half-sounded voice. As his hands tumble and complain against the strings, the notes sometimes pick out a riff, but the sound here is nearer towards sloping and whining, rather than finding its feet, it flurries and wobbles in a perpetual tremor, and you lose all sense of beginnings and ends.

As for the vocals, even Connors finds this music hard to hear. "I allowed it to happen, so it's there. It's pretty hard to take, though sometimes." The lengthy sevenettes, reflecting on his degraded and anxious lifestyle in Daggett Street (New Haven was listed by *Time* as one of the three poorest and most dangerous cities in the USA) read like an extended attempt to find an objective cause for what "ended up in the music," lies buzzing around, cold fear, accidental deaths of friends, a chronic cough his grandmother's stones about banishes, and wild dog packs howling all night. But ultimately this is a dogged outdoor construction which can't be reclaimed within the usual narratives of American Gothic: hillbilly psycho or boho

burn-out. This is primitivism at zero degree, and Byron Coley has as right when he describes the music as appearing "as its own stylistic terminus."

The album with folk singer-songwriter Kath Bloom takes you through the period 1981-84 (after which Connors left the music scene until 1988). Selected from five LPs originally produced and released by Connors, the collection showcases Bloom's songs and her breathy, fragile take on Jon Mitchell. However, Connors's accompaniment with its de-pitched notes and moans echoing bleakly around what I assume is Bloom's. Intersecting, shunted the project from folk towards smaller avant audiences, Connors's moaning alternates with her voice like a wounded dog scratching around the entrance of a ramshackle kirk, and at times Bloom's Jon Mitchell sounds as though she was weeping Patti Smith's tears.

HAT PITCH

Michel Doneda/Erik M/ Jean-Marc Montero

Not
VICTO ORT CO

Erik M

Ft. Anne
METALOG RECORDS CO

The French improvising trio of Doneda, Erik M and Montero came together for the first time on this studio date, to create an agonised, sudden landscape full of fear, violence, confusion and sensory overload. It's hard not to see this as a response to the US/90s bombing of Kosovo, which would have been in its sixth week when it was recorded. Turntableist Erik M creates some-setting dramatic loops, piles up the layers and engages in vicious needle abusing and overloaded sound on top. In this setting, Doneda's soprano is new melodic or lyrical, but always the strangled, emulsified, emaciated voice of the vulnerable, the frightened civilian at the mercy of naked military aggression. Montero weaves his table-top guitar and electronics almost invisibly into the fabric even as he cranks up the tension. His first mix abruptly cuts tracks short where the instrumentation thins and more table-top improv activity threatens to take over.

In comparison to the fabulous recordings of Not and his recent solo album, *Frame* is composed with less precision. The sound is prattier where the others are dirty and overloaded. The piece was commissioned by Jérôme Noémie to bookend his series of 25 "Onema For The Ear" 3" CDs of musique concrète and electroacoustics. Fittingly, Erik M drives on those CDs for its source material.

Where other such projects have failed, M has the vision not to get bogged down in his raw material. His keen feeling for drama permits him to behave as though he has whole worlds to play with, which he fashions lucidly before your ears. His strong

compositional sense and attention to detail suggest a close companion with John Wall. Both are musicians operating outside the electroacoustic mainstream — and they're both leagues ahead.

PHIL INGLAND

Eardrum

Least Light
LEAF 0407 CD 7819

Laika

Good Looking Blues
100 PURE PULSE 99 CO

Eardrum are percussionists Richard Olatunde Bakor and Lou Coccolini. On their debut album they set out to avoid a Fourth World mesh-mash, achieving instead a generous, multilayered, rhythmic mass. Coccolini's snare clear of the ponderous grooves he favours in God and Ice, and looks into the duo's mercurial, constantly mutating patterns. Melodic elements are provided by Nana Tsuboi's shunji piano (the Taraman twanger as they call it), which is echo-delayed to stunning effect on "From The Nucleus." He also plays flute and percussion, and additional musicians contribute occasional brass.

The rogue element in this aural feast is Gary Jeff (from Mass) and his unpredictable live electronics. They are often semi-merged in the mix, but break out in vast areas on "Sweeten" and buzz ominously on "Low Order." *Least Light* is far from being a drummer's jam session — they play for the overall structure rather than creating percussive fireworks. Eschewing sequencing and samples, their spontaneous approach, including a live hands-on mix and treatments, has produced brilliant results.

Coccolini has played with Laika in the past, and that group also use the studio as an important part of their music making. They recorded *Good Looking Blues* twice, according to vocalist and multi-instrumentalist Margaret Fiedler. Finally as a programmed template and then as a live performance. This, their third album, is both more direct and more sophisticated than its predecessors. Their pan-electronic, pan-rick, glock with a subtle and rhythmic nose that puts many practitioners in both fields to shame. The deliciously shadowy opera, "Black Cat Bone", finds cold electronic piano chords pitted against eruptions of flute and bass drum, drums and programming. Here their spacious sound is full of incident and detail, with scintillating analogue synth curlicues and dollops of creamy bass.

Fiedler sings in subdued, almost rap-style incantations, but here her voice is foregrounded more than her voice, drawing attention to her pitch, sometimes surreal lyrics. She tussles with trumpet and bass clarinet on "Widow's Weat", and on tracks like "Glorious Cloud", she gives her voice her rein, adding some effective emotional clout.

PHIL BARNES

Burnt Friedman & The Nu Dub Players

Just Landed
SCAPE SCAPED04 CO

The latest release on Pole's Scape imprint, takes a subtler route through the minefield of reggae reconfiguration than that of the label boss's recent output. Catalogue dweller 'Burnt' Friedman, variously known for his output as Nonplace Urban Field and Flanger (and formerly SP4 and Drome), has been a piece of grit in the electronic ambient scene since the early 1990s. On *Just Landed* he's not only credited as programmer and engineer, but also drummer. "Burnt The Beat" as well. Where to much latterday dub is content to be driven by tedious programmed percussion, this music rides smoothly on The Beat's leatherly cracks and crisp snares. The bass also steers free of cliché and often confines itself to providing a strong, single-note pulse.

Reggae is simply a starting point — minor key melodies, bass and echo — and this album has the emigrative sweep of a group like Tortoise (particularly the ear for the poignancy of tuned percussion). The music also sidesteps the headnod hero's "chance solemnity of many would-be dubsters" (the "group" last year put out an EP called *Do Not Engage It*) and has its tongue-in-cheek moments. While the playful humour is refreshing, the clever pop confection leads you to think that *Just Landed* is sweet.

Friedman's heavily interventionist mix brings a surreal gloss to the music, while his manipulation of the sounds, particularly the percussion, gives the music its strangeness and buoyancy. Where the music is furthest from the sounds of dub practice is where it's most interesting: the descending organ phrase of "Hut Soldier", the rolling bass surge of "Is Thunder" or the woofer and cello that feature in "Dub To The Music". Friedman's approach to DJing involves creating compositions that arise from the 'spontaneous interference' between the pre-recorded sounds he's running alongside one another. Eschewing the 'heaviness' that goes with most dub music, he's created a light but skilfully experimental piece of electronic pop.

WILL MONTGOMERY

Normand Guilbeault

Rus/Musical Plea
ARTISTWORKS MUSIC 71 2X CD

Louis-Rob (1844-85) is one of the most controversial figures in Canadian history, regarded by some as a hero, by others as a traitor. In January 1869 the Hudson Bay Company sold most of its land in the north-west to the Canadian government without regard for the territorial rights of the resident, French-speaking, half-breed Métis, who appealed to the well educated Red, a fellow Métis, to lead them in their struggle. As secretary of their movement, his



Moondog

In Europe

KOPF KD930140 CD

Moondog

A New Sound Of An Old Instrument

KOPF KD133017 CD

Moondog

Elpmas

KOPF KD123314 CD

Moondog & The London Saxophone

Sax Pax For A Sax

KOPF KD943333 CD

The first time Moondog died, he ended up in Germany. Born Louis T. Hardin in Maryville, Kansas in 1916, he took the name 'Moondog' upon himself while living on the streets of Manhattan in the late 1940s in memory of a dog he once owned "who used to howl at the moon more than any dog I ever knew of". So permanent a fixture did he become on the corner of Sixth Avenue and 54th Street in his handmade Viking costume, complete with horned helmet and spear, that when he suddenly disappeared in 1974, the blind musician was widely believed to be dead. Paul Simon even appeared on TV mourning his loss.

In fact, he had been invited by Hessisches Rundfunk to give two concerts in Frankfurt, decided that life in the land of the great composers suited him just fine and had settled there. A heart attack in a Münster hospital on 8 September last year brought the second, intensely creative, period to a permanent close, leaving Moondog's imperishable spirit free to move on. His soul's exact whereabouts are currently unknown, but the opening composition on *In Europe*, originally released in 1978, offers a clue. *Wing* I was written in the summer of 1976 to commemorate the launch of the American space probe to Mars. An elegantly simple piece for celeste, performed here by Moondog himself, its unhurried counterpoint suggests the smooth exploratory trajectories required to navigate the solar system. It also sets the mood for an exquisite collection of musical miniatures, ranging from *Hamdall Farjane* — a stately multitracked canon for nine walkie-talkies — to the sweetly eccentric 514 waltz time on *In Vienna*. But the series of six *Lögurdr* for pipe organ included on *In Europe* leave the most lasting impression of Moondog's art. The form impressed itself upon the composer when he first discovered the score to "Summer is Acomin" in 1938. The *Lögurdr* is capable of conveying great emotional range in the simplest of terms.

They also feature strongly on *A New Sound Of An Old Instrument*, a 1979 selection of 13 solos and duets performed on the Brel organ at the Herz-Jesu-Kirche in Oberhausen to Moondog's own rhythmic accompaniment. Aware of the church organ's pagan roots in the pipes of Pan, he blends Baroque counterpoint with Native American beats in such vividly descriptive pieces as *Sand Lily*, *First Rower* and *Single Foot*, which evokes the even-paced clatter of a horse's gait when each of its hooves comes down separately. At times, Moondog's new sound conjures up the breathy open tones of the old fairground callo, it's because that particular instrument links the muses of Ancient Greece with the sideshows on the midway.

Moondog's most majestic and generous achievement on disc, however, is likely to remain *Elpmas*, an intricately engineered set from 1991 that represents, in the composer's own words, "a protest against our treatment of aboriginal people, against our treatment of nature, plants and animals, also against that idea

that 'we discovered the New World', when it is as old or older than ours". Marimbas interlock over sampled telephones in ornate canons conveying the preserved memory of Arapaho ceremonies, bird calls in ancient rain forests and the distant song of the whales. *Volsa da garibas* sedately sail over plodding beats on *Wetwood Hat* as a 100 year old barjo picks out a tune redolent of the Western prairies and the Oregon Trail. The plaintive simplicity of the two-part *Fujimori*, for strings, voices and oboe, prepares the listener for the acoustic expanses of *Cosmic Meditation*, an extended voyage into the "Sideral Sea" of Ambient counterpoint.

Sax Pax For A Sax is, by comparison, a more muscular affair. Recorded in Bath in 1994 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Adolphe Sax's death, it captures Moondog's own Baroque dissections of big band swing in their purest, most dynamic forms. Moondog coined the term "ZAJAZZ" to convey how his music looks back to classical compositional methods, as well as forwards to new combinations of techniques and ideas. Formed in 1991 on the occasion of Moondog's 75th birthday for the sole purpose of playing his music, The London Saxophone features members of The Apollo Saxophone Quartet at its core, augmented by Darryl Thompson on double bass, Liam Noble on piano and a chorus of male voices featuring Peter Hammill, Andrew Davis and Stuart Gordon. The sparse wind arrangement on *Bird's Lament*, dedicated to the memory of Charlie Parker, brings great strength and subtlety to a piece formerly included on the 1969 CBS album of Moondog's orchestral works. However, the versions contained here of *Single Foot* and *Chaconne In C*, retitled *Mother's Whistler*, pale slightly when set against those on *A New Sound Of An Old Instrument* and *In Europe*.

In a musical career that spanned several decades, the superiority of one composition or arrangement over another probably had little meaning to so prolific and restless a talent. In fact, all four discs, which are only now getting proper UK distribution, contain little in the way of dates and opus numbers. Now that he's gone, there's clearly a lot to be sorted out. And even more to feel grateful for.

KEN HOLLINGS

organised blockades against government surveys and was instrumental in the formation of the Hwe, provisional government of which he became president. The problem soon escalated into armed conflict. Normand Guilbeault's *Red/Purple Alo* dramatizes their uprisings in Manitoba (1869-70) and Saskatchewan (1885), culminating in the trial and execution of Red in 1885. Guilbeault's position is pro-Red and he offers this nearly two hour work as a "far tribute to this national hero, unjustly accused of high treason".

A patchwork of styles, including rowing

native drums, *Red/Purple Alo* is a military marching theme, jazz and live improvisation. *Red/Purple Alo* is on first hearing an uneven experience. Though greater familiarity with the composer's polyphonic method reveals a work of considerable emotional power, rooted in the musical landscape of Red's time. English and French narrators speak for the principal participants in the action: the accompanying booklet contains relevant historical documents, but non-French readers will have problems understanding about half of it. The impressive, which accounts for the radical

language of *Red/Purple Alo* is a mixture of superior musical music and is at its best dissonant when describing conflict, or the threat of it. However, supported by Jean Derome's flute, Lou Sabat's vocal and accordion improvisation on *Le Sol* is both lyrical and memorably poignant. "Batoche" with its solemn processional tempo and evocative military horns has an Ayler-like flavour. The excellent live recording documents the performance of a 12 piece ensemble drawn from some of the finest musicians in Canadian New Music.

CHRIS BLACKFORD

Tom Johnson

The Closed Catalogue
WRC0205 8123 CD

Tom Johnson has long been called minimalist's most original exponent. As the composer of such pared-down gems as *Four Note Opera* (1972), scored — you guessed it — for four notes, live singers, a piano and the recent *Gryon And Silence* (1999), which incorporated lengthy periods of silence, he has put a new slant on the genre's desire for simple forms and reduced materials. Unsurprisingly his

uncompromising and austere rationalism that led to him being overshadowed by the more media-friendly minimalist Steve Reich. Philip Glass and John Adams. Relentlessly ploughing through all the 8178 chords possible in one octave. The Choir Catalogue met a glacial reception at its premiere in Houston in 1986.

John's bugbear has always been the Romantic and expressionist legacy, hence his insistence on the need to avoid subjective self-expression. Or as he puts it: "to find the music, not compose it." To discover instead of creating? The Choir Catalogue does just that: it is an objective and eminently logical demonstration of a musical phenomenon. Yet, despite the apparent simplicity of its concise verbal score, it is a difficult piece for anyone who has tried to play it on the piano will concede. The composer is the only musician who has been able to play it up until now, although versions of it have been produced on computer-controlled instruments. Like the rest of his work, however, *The Choir Catalogue* is more than just a laborious, time-consuming exercise. As the two-note chords are followed by three-note chords and so on up to 13, they begin to trigger all kinds of strange resonances, giving rise to a truly galvanizing experience. At this point, Johnson's quest for objectivity starts to make sense.

KARIN KAGAN

Kammerflimmer Kollektief
Incommensurable
R5 (UK) CD 9301 2268 CD

Kammerflimmer Kollektief
Mazette
RAYMOND CORRIE (UK) CD

Tied And Ticked Trio
E1 EA2
PAYOLA CD 01712751 CD

The second best thing about being a reviewer is finding an album that completely undermines your prejudices (the very best thing of course is having your prejudices resoundingly confirmed). Among that Tied And Ticked Trio are a blow-in ensemble who place themselves somewhere in the overlap of avant-jazz and post-rock, I settled down to listen to something worthy, clear and beautiful. No such luck. E1 EA2 is a revelation: a subtle, sly, dark drawing on the productive side of 70s jazz-rock fusion and adding a contemporary spin through the use of samples and electronic percussion.

In much the same way that *Piccolo Five* only have two members, the Trio is a six piece unit augmented by a further six guest musicians. "All instruments should be 20 people in their argument, and on this evidence it's a hard one to refute. They don't hide their influences." Herbie Hancock sits

in the middle of most tracks, while others draw on the rich tradition of West Coast jazz or the rich textures of Afro-Brazilian samba. Some tracks cast their net wider still. "Ultimate" is a credible stab at Bayonian dub. "Sevapol" only needs a Natcha Atlas waltz to become a Triangular Underground effort.

Best of all it's a clearly focused collection. Most tracks are short, setting their agenda and nailing the mood well before indulgence sets in. The same can be said for the two albums from labelmates Konfirmmer Kollektief (those translations? Heart Attack Collective). Conceived as a pair, *Blender* and *Incommensurable* see KK's leader Thomas Weber testing out two contrasting genres. The first comprises 13 electronic pieces, the second lists a small jazz group loose on three of these themes, plus three others.

The results are always interesting, but *Blender* strays several times into the dodgy zone (Weber overlays the slow-build to climactic *dissonance* of card) and some of the playing on *Incommensurable* is too doggedly strenuous in its approximation of Albert Ayler's free jazz. The demanding music, made by black Americans in the 1960s, was rooted in political upheaval, but when its tropes and strategies are impersonated by Europeans it comes over as waiting for waiting's sake.

Even so, both KK albums have tracks worth cherishing. "Impioid" (on *Blender*) works up a galvanizing head of steam as it sounds back some unsettling urban rhythms, and the cover of Robert Wyatt's "Verte Lait" (on *Incommensurable*) is beautifully done, with Heide Wenden's spinning violin lines soothing and grounding the fierce sax sawtooths of Dietrich Foch. The Wyatt track is the one time KK admit that there might be something valuable in a melody. Tied And Ticked Trio knew that all along, which is why there is the album it'll return to.

ANDY REDHURST

Steve Lacy & Irene Aebi
The Joan Miro Foundation Concert
S (UK) CD 01712751 CD

Soprano saxophonist Steve Lacy and singer Irene Aebi gave this concert in Barcelona in June 1995. The recording was not planned for release, and as a consequence the sound is a little distant, with occasional mite distortion. During the first 16 minutes Lacy plays seamlessly through sax. The sound is clear, comparisons with evident mastery. No surprises. The remaining 30 minutes is devoted to extended realizations of Lacy's settings of texts by Herman Melville. Kirk Schwenker and Robert Creeley. Again, nothing unexpected if you are at all familiar with his and Aebi's output. But hearing the duo without the Lacy ensemble's customary augmentation is it striking how complementary their voices have become. Aebi's singing is an acquired taste, registering through shyness in the upper register, and a

touch forbidding in her deliberate phrasing. Still, her calculated formality is an effective foil for the saxophonist's agile, immaculately choreographed swerves. However, though it's presented with evident care, this respectable CD is hardly essential, despite the useful inclusion of song texts and a 1993 interview about their engagement with literary texts.

JULIAN COWLEY

Joëlle Léandre & Sebi Tramontana
E vero
R5 (UK) CD 9301 2268 CD

Joëlle Léandre & Giorgio Occhipinti
Incommensurable
R5 (UK) CD 9301 2268 CD

Leimgruber/Crispell/Léandre/Hauser
Quartet No. 6
W (UK) CD 01712751 CD

Schweizer/Chios/Lewis/Léandre/Sommer
The Storytelling Of The Winter
Palace
W (UK) CD 01712751 CD

E vero is another of French double bassist Joëlle Léandre's enjoyable improv duos, once again revealing her subtle inclination towards vulnerability, melodic and rhythmic gestures (not that common in improv music) that, when abstract jazz-making has become the dominant strategy, in fact she's not averse to setting up something approaching a groove on her engaging solo piece "E vero n°4" and the duet "E vero n°6". In this instance her duo partner is characterful improv trombonist Sebi Tramontana, whose subtle attack is best illustrated on the almost nonchalantly developed "E vero n°3". He effectively deploys repetition on "E vero n°7", counterbalancing Léandre's searching arc strokes. Both improvisers wield wonderfully while they work on a stylized "E vero n°8", which typifies the relaxed atmosphere of these beautifully balanced dialogues.

Léandre's duo CD *Incommensurable* matches her well-known partner Giorgio Occhipinti, whose ebullience is infused with a generosity typical of Italian improv and free jazz, while also recalling the great Ron Carter. Sergei Koryunov, his and Léandre's dialogues are both playful and pensive. They recast themselves as a string duo on "Part Five" and "Part Eight", where Occhipinti delivers inside the piano for an extended range of timbres. Léandre's melancholy bowing brings bluish shimmers and Indian hues to "Part Four", to which Occhipinti adds a few carefully placed baroque flourishes.

Quartet No. 6 documents the first meeting of Urs Leimgruber (sax), Marilyn Crispell (piano), Fritz Hauser (drums) and Léandre again at the Canadian Musique Actuelle

listed in May '96. Described as a suite in eight movements, it opens with "Quartet No. Part 1", which quickly establishes an air of buoyant ensemble cohesion as abstract playing effortlessly mingles with free jazz. Yet for all their cohesion these pieces lack sufficient character to engage at an emotional level. While it's pleasing to hear Crispell adopting a less cool Taylor-like percussive strategy, her lyrical skill leaves rather clinical. Leimgruber is too close to Evan Parker for comfort and Hauser's busy percussion is rarely more than workmanlike.

Finally, this is the second time around for *The Storytelling Of The Winter Palace*, first released in 1988, which features three performances from Cologne and Zurich. Here Léandre is joined by Les Dadoisios colleagues Magda Nech (voice) and Irene Schweizer (piano), plus trombonist George Lewis and percussionist Gunter Sommer. Nech's lush vocal around *Le Improv* is keenly focused in its seamless transitions from multi-layered to sparse activity. Schweizer and Lewis are magnificent in their assured control of dynamics.

CHRIS BLACKFORD

LOOS
Armstrong
W (UK) CD 01712751 CD

If you draw a line from Futurism through Louis Armstrong and Sun Ra, and if your hand extends a bit when you approach *Sockhead* (on its way to Anthony Braxton) and then the no-brains in the nohouse of Dutch academic jazz, you will find the LOOS sextet. Composer Peter Van Bergen attempts a synthesis of the aforementioned in a precisely structured way: when decay and the silence which follows it are foregrounded in spacious, thoughtful music characterized by its fondness for suspense and compressed energy. Melody is apparent only as a trace sensed in the aftermath of an explosion. Its residues are anger (which Van Bergen finds in the work of Riel and madness which he hears in the blues), expressive indices of the process by which time is telescoped and the complexities of history are boked down to essence. But the madness here is idly circumscribed in fiercely formal compositions and the anger is suppressed in knotted, wincing, of subtly played fragments of 20th century jazz. A sense of disorientation and controlled chaos, adds an element of raw violence to the disciplined playing. It sounds like the lid could blow off at any time.

Van Bergen says in the sleeve notes that this is "not a hand of historical CD. I don't want to be seen as a rediscovery of Louis Armstrong" who I hadn't realized had been lost. Rather, it's a bold effort at reinvention, attempting to preprint the indelible qualities of a great artist and renew them, surpass them in the present. If such ambitions are necessarily doomed to failure, LOOS seem unaware of any problem mired in the master. Their playing is self-

Bewitched glitch, Kid-606



Various Artists

Clicks + Cuts

MILLE PLATEAU MP79 2XCD

Mille Plateaux compilations have been the stumbling block for successive waves of electro sceptics. While it's unlikely anyone'll go for everything on a given disc, it would be a poor mind indeed that wasn't waylaid by some aspect of these encyclopaedias and their "work in progress" from across the remix globe: a thousand plus one levels, speeds, grafts, uses — things spreading out horizontally rather than along the usual linear vertical axes.

Because Milieu releases tend to creep and settle and seep, I gave *Clicks + Cuts* the benefit of the doubt when it initially failed to wow me like previous (re)mixtures. I found it characteristically perplexing, but for uncharacteristically worrying reasons: after two or three months of playing the Ambient held out of the thing, only one or two tracks registered, whatsoever, to ring around my head. For the first time since *In Memoriam Giles Deveraux* broke down my resistance (all those moons ago, it felt as if Milieu P were a lag behind, not ahead of the current incoming. There are signs

here — virtually the whole of the first CD — of an incipient homogeneity that is disquieting for all the wrong reasons.

Positive thoughts first, though. There are tracks here that live up to the thematic promise of the title (and they're all on CD2). The stand out track, "click and out" wise, is "Sonajazzmaster" from Kid-606. Heard blind I thought, "Woah! what is that?" (as you should), and it turned out to be the same Kid-606 who I endorse elsewhere, separately, in this issue (see Critical Beasts). This is the sort of thing I presumed C+C would be stuffed with — impure bristling changes — a jousance of unconventions clicking your off switch when you expected something full on. CD2 has a couple of other (such) moments: a smart bomb from Kate Clayton, which is far from his usual best of smooth homogeno-dubs; and Thomas (aka Esar) Brinkmann characteristically mischievous on the steely sentinal muzik of "Maschine". These aside, virtually nothing stuck in my mind even after repeated plays — very odd, as the line-up includes Autopoeses, Panacea and Ultra-red, all of whom have impressed me recently.

But not as bad as CD1, which goes by in a homogenous burr, lush, slight, samey, unobtrusive. (OK for a certain sort of Ambient — but not what the title-less promises at all.) The predominant sound is a sort of soft, licky modern dub (epitomized by this snk track?), pleasant enough, but secondary vapour heard alongside a parallel collection like the recent Institut Für Feinmotorik output.

I imagine this is only a blip on the machine, a dip compounded by the fact that (a) we've been spoiled for choice recently, and (b) the suspicion that the work of certain artists here (Ultra-red, Vladislav Deloy, Autopoeses) may work best as part of its own unfolding whole. In other words, it doesn't suit "greatest clicks" treatment. Compared to the knock-out of last year's *Modulation & Transformation 4*, this gives off the air of freuding water — although in Kid-606 they may have identified a 'new' Oval, a real paradigm hand-turner. But when I find a whole side of MP annoyingly bland, there's something amiss. Crypticism can become a crypt, and MP shouldn't allow even a hint of complacency, of becoming an IGFA brand name, allowing the merely pleasant to masquerade as 'radical' just because a handy theory sez so...

IAN PENMAN

Alvin Lucier

Theme

LOWEY MUSIC 15111 CD

Lucier's approach to music couples the technological society of an experimental physicist with a taste for the kind of laudable conceptions found in the scientific romances of Jules Verne. Indeed his early piece *Chromatics* (1968) which investigates the acoustic properties of portable resonant environments, was directly inspired by an image from a Verne film adaptation showing underwater explorers wearing air-filled conch shells on their heads.

His compositions are invariably dedicated to the process of 'teasing revelations from the

prose'. *THYME* collects three pieces from the mid-80s. *Music For Piano With Flapovers* (Songs were written for Los Sward who performs it here. It evolved from *Music On A Long Thin Wire* (1977) in which a large horseshoe magnet and an oscillator cause a monochord to vibrate and sound. Sward locates live small electromagnets upon her piano strings and interpreting a prose score, reveals the resulting acoustic phenomena to analyse the instrument's latent life.

The album's last track *Theme* sets a poem by John Ashbery for the voices of Sam Ashby, Thomas Buckner, Jacqueline Humbert and Joan La Barbara. The setting involves putting microphones inside various vessels, including a milk bottle (an orchid egg) a vase and a

shellac. Breating voices cause these 'four small rooms' to resonate. The piece harks back to Lucier's best known piece *I Am String In A Room* (1969), which uses a band statement of fact as a key to open 'the secret door to the sound situation that you experience in a room', and beyond that to *Chromatics*.

The third piece, *Music For Gamelan Instruments, Microphones, Amplifiers And Loudspeakers*, is the perfect corrective for listeners deterred by the saccharine kitsch that often affects Western adaptations of gamelan. Lucier has effectively emptied the instruments of Indonesian associations and appropriated them as enclosed resonant spaces, whose distinctive acoustic properties are explored quietly and alluringly.

JULIAN COWLEY

The MGS

The Bag Bang! A Best Of The MGS
BAND 021001 3 CD

No less a figure than author Norman Mailer described The MGS as "the electro-mechanical climax of our age" citing the group's relevance as musical forerunners during the Vietnam War era. To their audiences in the Detroit Ann Arbor area, the Five were, variously, groovers fresh from the drag strip who gametashed the hippy scene, the house band at Detroit's Grande Ballroom, lauded by the visiting English press for whom the Five would open, guileless pairs of the local White Panther movement, guitar-brandishing anarchist commanders, or a brilliant swordband which distated James Brown's choreography, the amplified onslaught of The Yardbirds and the anti-formalist best of Sun Ra. The MGS were the bunch from the Motor City dubbed most likely to make it, yet they resisted in pulling the mat out from under themselves with psychotic insolence only surpassed by their compatriots, The Stooges.

The story of The MGS has been told in numerous rock history books, usually as a cautionary tale of how not to become famous and well-respected. Until now, the most accurate account was related by the members themselves in the oral history of punk, *Phase 101*, which correctly posits the Five as progenitors of the Dead End Kid movement in rock that would flourish a decade after their own brief hours in 1968. *The Bag Bang!* notes The MGS's career with substantial line items by Jeremy Gutterman and guitarist Wayne Kramer. The former notes the deleterious influence of managers (Wilma Panther martyr John Seckler) and producers (Jon Liebowitz in his post-rockist, pre-Spicean transitional period). Gutterman's own judgement which passed for gospel in the Five's camp, one can but marvel at the strength of the musical armistice which misguided A&R advice surrounding them.

Kramer's participation in preparing *The Bag Bang!* guarantees a not devoted to The MGS's musical reputation. The MGS. Beginning with their earliest singles, long

confident, precise, the deconstructed homage lost depth by a studied virtuosity. The lists declaimed other than sung by Dennis Rudge are portentous, the *Deliques* of Stone, the philosophy of Sun Ra, a Futurist love story for machines. Rudge's delivery a part impersonation part camey patter. In their live sets he provides a powerful theatrical element. A terrific performer, his presence often the strained pose of the instrumentation, Rudge breaks into raps and lets them into the mix as a word parable, while the group circle the shuffling memory of Louis Armstrong — the uprooted roots of modern music, in Van Bergen's story of history. It's uncanny, demanding and impressively single-minded

ED BAXTER

available only on French bootleg pressings and working through the three official albums recorded before their demise in the early '70s the set represents the best possible testimonial to the memory of these purveyors of a factory-forged, high-energy sound. Unfortunately it serves to remind that the best MCS song, "Black To Comm" was never properly recorded (although several live versions exist) on the series of posthumous MCS releases issued by the West Coast Total Energy label. Its absence will be felt by those familiar with MCS sets during their Elektra label years. The late Rob Tyler's vocal approach of rushing less than complete, visceral involvement in a given song, the twin gunning of Kramer and Fred Sone, Smith still requires awe, being the sound of an assembly line made to howl at top volume.

That most renowned anthem "Kick Out The Jams" is herein in unexpurgated form as are tracks from the groups' Atlantic albums (most notably the under-appreciated *Hot Time* and their searing, a live cut from French TV. Most of these tracks have plenty of read left on them and are capable of inspiring awe in the words of their maker: of culture. JC Crawford "I gave you a testimonial. The MCS!"

RICHARD HENDRISON

Mark Mothersbaugh

His Hugs and Meme Score
(CAPRI/IMPALTES R0204-1 CD)

As a founding member of '70s mongrelized rockers Devo, mid-seventies Mark Mothersbaugh recreated himself as Boy Boy the big baby with a rubberized head who was their compe and mascot. No Devo show was complete without his appearance (wired in a playpen with only a fork and a plugged-in electric toaster to keep him occupied) squealing his "The Words Get Stuck In My Throat" (swearing to the group's suitably deranged accompaniment).

The spirit of Boy Boy was nudging his creator's elbow when Mothersbaugh helped put together Devo's *U2* listening collection which deliberately blunted their disco-Hits backlash and transformed it into a surreal shopping mall soundtrack. Since then he has released two (identical) instrumental albums and has concentrated on composing soundtracks, the most successful of which is his music for *The Rugrats*; the cartoon babies who could be seen as the natural de-evolution of his Boy Boy persona.

His score for the Ruyiguts, big screen debut (with additional music by Jamshed Shanti) sees him pushing The London Musicopolis Orchestra through various musical hoops (from Strauss's Also Sprach Zarathustra and John Williams's *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*), and otherwise "The music mix of Zappa-like orchestral standards, offbeat jazz limbo and Carl Saterfield-jazzed John influenced cases emerging throughout the soundtrack is perfectly balanced."

EDWIN POWNEY

Conlon Nancarrow

Studies For Player Piano
(WERSO WER0907 SACD)

Pondering the situation of the composer in the machine age back in 1933, George Gershwin declared: "The composer has to do every bit of his work himself. Hand work can never be replaced in the composition of music. It must ever become machine-made in that sense it would cease to be an art."

Some ten years later, Conlon Nancarrow born in Arizona but ended in Mexico following the decision to fight against Franco during the Spanish Civil War, commenced work on a body of composition that casts an ironic light across Gershwin's conclusion. Called *Studies For Player Piano*, they have collectively come to be recognised as a monumental presence in 20th century music. In terms of direct influence upon others, Nancarrow doesn't loom large. But George Ligeti's conversion to complex rhythmic multilayering reflected his exposure to the *Studies* and Hansari Birtwistle undoubtedly drew upon Nancarrow when composing linked sequences for his opera *The Most Of Orpheus*, intended to evoke "a mad, mechanical percussion instrument" But as recordings of the *Studies* have become generally available—initially courtesy of Tom Ruckner's invaluable 1970 Arch Records, then on the Wergo CDs collected here—Nancarrow has surely exercised a far broader, if less tangible influence upon contemporary music. Today, his ingenuity and singularity of vision and the enormous dedication of energy required to realise his unique music, appear nothing short of heroic. Nancarrow's glorious obsession transformed the player piano from an Edwardian parlour novelty into a credible vehicle for his art. OK, Stravinsky had written a study for the instrument in 1917, but his interest was tempered by the demands of a high public profile. In his obscure isolation, Nancarrow addressed the player piano's potential with monomaniacal intensity.

The resulting music may bear the stamp of the machine age, but the process of producing the actual piano rolls was immensely onerous. The time taken in punching each hole by hand was wildly in excess of the finished piece's actual playing time. Gershwin would surely have recognised that the necessary hand work required a craft ethos quite alien to the world of Henry Ford and Scientific Management.

The Wergo recordings, made from Nancarrow's own player piano in Mexico City, have appeared before in five separate volumes. Individually they received copious praise from reviewers, and won prestigious awards that signalled the growth of Nancarrow's reputation at the start of the 1990s. Collectively, their impact is overwhelming. *Schubert's* the most ranges from an ecstatic Borge-Moose Suite to an eerily sparse *Allegretto Capriccio*. At times, it involves great knowledge, dense, very often the playing is superhumanly rapid. Nonetheless, the

music has none of that cold remoteness which often arises when similar effects are generated by electronic means.

JULIAN COWLEY

The Necks

Hanging Gardens
(REAL OF MUSIC RECORDS CD)

Australian cult trio The Necks' latest album inherits its powers in subtle ways. Consisting of a single, barely swerving track lasting a shade over an hour, the music takes the listener on a journey that is as much his or her own making as that of the musicians. The album reveals its full definition: low-key jazz fusion infused with an eerie spatial component? Cross-eyed Ambient? Ballad with a world's trace memory of psychedelia? It's your guess.

A few hard facts. The Necks are a keyboard-bass-drums trio whose work—both jointly and individually—has earned them sessions with the likes of Peter Brozman and Bradford Marsalis. Hanging Gardens' seventh album is the sequel to 98's *Piano Boss Drum*, which was named Australia's jazz record of the year. But rather than falling into traditional subordinating rhythm and lead roles, The Necks operate as three engines in tandem. Tony Buck's relentless percussion, Chris Abrahams' Rhodes piano providing death charge effects and Lloyd Swanton's fuzzed-up rocket bass. Structured around a simple percolating riff that builds through to the piece's end, it certainly requires patience, for its musical text only slowly reveals itself en route to its finale where, reduced to developments of the riff, the piece becomes a series of one-track outtakes subtended in ether. A spaced, spacy ending to an intriguing album.

LOUISE GRAY

New York Art Quartet

30th Resonance
(DWR00155 CD)

Founded by late gadabouts John Tchicah and trombonist Roswell Rudd, The New York Art Quartet was an influential radical free jazz group which spread the seeds of Albert Ayler and the New Thing after a succession of bassists. Reggie Workman took the position and petrosaurus Milford Graves soon became a key member. Tchicah later said that as the first genuinely free drummer, Graves made the group's approach possible. The Quartet produced two albums, including *ESP's The New York Art Quartet* which is included in the Dutch Calyx label's *ESP* reissue programme (see Boomerang). That album also featured poet and writer Lefko Jones, later Ann Baraka, who turns up at the 1959 reunion. Rooted in *Drums*, Roswell Rudd brought range to his vocalized tones of early jazz to his work in the early '60s, with such musicians as Archie Shepp and Bill Dixon. John Tchicah had been with Shepp in The New York

Contemporary Five and in 1965 he took part in Coltrane's *Ascension* and Ayler's *New York Eye And Ear Concert*. During the '60s he converted to tenor, which makes for one major difference between 35th *Resonance* and the NYAQ's *ESQ* recordings; another is the crystal clear sound as opposed to the notorious lo-fi of *ESP*. Although the members are now in or approaching their states, it's hard to detect any loss of power or facility.

"Hearing Of Remembrance Journeys" is inescapably from the opening stretch, presumably Ann Baraka's. Here, his and element in the sound, but his voice soon becomes problematic. He enters midway through the 14-minute "Reverence", repeating "Of what use is poetry?" No comment. "Lanka Del India" miraculously the first of four tracks without Baraka, is a brilliant dig with a majestic theme. "It's Bittaly Jamboree" begins as a ghostly march, improbably by Tchicah's baggish tenor, but passes through a bewildering variety of moods. "Voting Ojig" opens as a showcase for Graves' "Perceiving Passivity" is a ecstatic, collective improvisation with Tchicah's gorgeous hollowed tone prominent. This is jazz revivalism in the best sense—a flawed jewel of an album.

ADRI HARTLEY

Will Oidham

Chug-a-rug of Lost Blues Vol 2
(DWR00154 CD)

Following up *Lost Blues*, Guerspeno is a further collection of singles, B-sides, live sessions and oddities from the Oidham/Plaque back catalogue. The opener "Drinking Woman" backed Plaque's debut single, while "Stable Wit" and "For The Melons" were issued on a live 7". It's a good way to sample Oidham in shepherding form, ducking in and out of focus between associations of ragged backwoods ballads, ready players to New York, weary, tired takes on folk and, on a couple of tracks where guitars are dropped for synthesizers, a less successful glossy pop dirge. The emphasis is generally on the slow get of Oidham's acoustic guitar and sometimes convincing, sometimes annoyingly overplayed mobility effect.

Because Oidham came into music from acting, some critics claim his patchwork Appalachian persona render the music inauthentic. I don't see that as a problem. Both Dylan and The Band, two of the many reference points for Oidham were at their best when they most imitated themselves. Rather than the same faded world-weary seam between folk, rock and indie experiment, his many collaborators include players from Skunk, Toronto, Royal T and The Dirty Threeds. Oidham's anthropomorphics suggest too marooned in the crosscurrents. Lacking a clear enough mythology of his own, his songs rely on reference, rather than direct statement. "I've Been Mothers' Boy" is atmospheric, enough, taking off musically from "Knocking On Heaven's Door", but hung in



Jah Wobble & The Invaders Of The Heart

Full Moon Over The Shopping Mall
3048187 3048187 CD

The latest musical odyssey of Jah Wobble arrives with a characteristic lack of explanation: just a track listing, a line up and some sleeve notes from the man credited with Cretan pipes, flute, shakuhachi and goethoms. Wife contributor Clive Bell. Plus a CD with some of the most compelling music you could wish to hear.

"The Master Wobble sets an example of perfect creative focus and freedom," writes Bell, "and laughs at his followers: His laugh says, see, it's easy you tossers, and we bite our lips and redouble our concentration."

He is joking, of course. "Jah Wobble would like it to be known that in reality he is not a master. In fact, he hardly knows anything at all," runs the self-deprecating explanatory line on the back cover, just in case you should have missed Bell's heavy doses of humour. And yet, while Wobble and the musicians he has gathered together for this excursion are obviously capable of laughter, it is evidently as a release from the intensity of their approach to the music contained here.

There's something all too perfect about the Wobble myth. The streetwise Steptoe Dodger who borrowed a bass from Sid Vicious and did what Vicious could never quite manage (he actually learned to play it); the shambolic amateur giving way to the limitless vistas of the purely instinctive.

With Keith Levene and John Lydon in PL, Wobble

rerouted dub into the desolate landscape of Anglo-ambience. He was the End of Public Image, seemingly emblematic rather than essential, despite the solidity of his rolling basslines. Yet the post-Wobble Pil, descended into self-parody at roughly the same rate as the post-End Romy, while Wobble's stature, like End's, seems only to have increased with the passing of time.

Throughout his career Wobble has had the luxury of picking his collaborators. *Full Moon Over The Shopping Mall* features the same core musicians as last year's *Deep Space*. The combination of Wobble and ex-Can drummer Jack Ubbesatz always seemed like the avant rock fantasy rhythm section and once again they lock together into a single unit, bound by a hypnotic sense of timing. The title track sets their nagging rhythms centre stage, as newcomer Balu Shrivastava's star counterpoints the unearthly howling of Bell's Cretan pipes and Jean-Pierre Rasia's honking crumhorn. There's a sense of magic and exoticism but also of brooding violence in the brutal simplicity of Wobble's bass, which surfaces and resurfaces through the dueling harmonies of East and West.

Considering the instrumentation at work, it is remarkable how urban this opener sounds. Perhaps it's the auto-tuning of the title, but "Full Moon Over The Shopping Mall" locates its mysticism in a particularly modern context. This, however, is only a departure point as the throbs of traffic and the scream of sirens are left behind in "Ethos", with Wobble's bass diving deeper in the mix, below the entrancing innovations of Shrivastava's multi-tracked, wordless vocals, and Ubbesatz's contribution reduced to providing a perfectly placed counterpoint to the same player's tables.

"Waning Moon" continues the increasing Eastward drift, with Wobble and Ubbesatz providing a driving pulse that can be felt but scarcely heard. "Waning Moon" gives the pipes greater prominence, beginning with a solo of naked, primitive beauty. "Acting The Goat", beginning with gorgeous stereo goethoms from Bell, brings the rhythm section roaring back into prominence, building a glorious cacophony around their essential sense of accelerated motion.

Looking again at Bell's sleeve notes ("The target is not the audience, but the communal state of enlightenment that listeners and musicians may reach together at any moment, maybe between the drawing of two breaths"), suddenly they don't seem so much of a joke.

BON WATSON

conventional fusion part to the latter. Indeed, the combination of his trumpet and project leader Nelson's fluid runs on a Fender Rhodes piano sometimes brings the album close to generic fusion, but even these passages are tempered by the more rigid formal constraints of the electronic elements at their base.

TON HOGE

Bernard Parmegiani

Pop Electacoustic
PLATE LUNCH/95 CD

Born in 1927, Bernard Parmegiani had little formal musical tuition and originally trained and worked as a sound engineer. But in his dedication to electroacoustic music, he combines an improviser's intuition with a composer's sense of form. Unfortunately, only a fraction of Parmegiani's output has been recorded. His highly structured *De Natura Sonorum* from 1975 appeared last year on INA. However, none of the tracks here quite approaches that masterpiece of electronic abstraction. *El Apres 1973* comes closest, even though it features a real-time instrument in Michel Portet's baritone. The track opens with a gauzy, tango-like backdrop to Portet's huffing and spitting. The baritone is swathed so that it eventually comes across as a choir humming peacefully with the electronic sounds.

The other three tracks, from 1966-69, are more clearly in the musique concrete tradition. *Qu'Appel L'Aire* is a collage of pop and symphonic sounds, but Parmegiani avoids — or simply lacked the resources to adopt — the mosaic approach of plunderphonics. His extracts are longer and often readily identifiable, with quotes from Stravinsky's *The Rite Of Spring*, Messiaen's *Quatre Pour Le Final Of Time* and Beethoven's setting of jazz and Latin music, and snippets of spoken voice and radio announcements. Paraleptic is an "electroacoustic divanetto", which mixes natural and synthetic sounds with a prominent role for Hatanaka's swooping strings and pop samples. *Jazzes* (1968) has the least enduring impact. A listing of electroacoustic tape accompanies a group of French free jazz musicians, but the live music is unimpressive and the recording very boxy — then again, most of these recordings are showing signs of age. But this is a much-needed collection from a neglected master.

ANDY HARTSON

Jean-François Pauvros & Keiji Haino

Y
SAMBALA 95003 CD

Michel Bulteau

Répertoire
RSC/CLC CD

Jean-François Pauvros is an unlikely-looking guitar hero, but since the end of the '70s his participation in semi-legendary French groups

Ned Young's last record aside, with *Wobble* seemingly free associated out of old rock songs, against a piano and two idly strumming and plucking guitars. But what works emphatically on one track can seem anaemic on another. Then again, his eclecticism allows him to pack some surprises, such as the strange outtake to "Gazette", which seems to plunder and disfigure fragments of the Twin Peaks theme or "I Got Big Balls", which boasts about just that, while staying within the frame of a Joan Baez torch song.

PAUL WATSON

Pan American

360 Business/360 Bypass
BLAST/951 BPP/1 CD

Like its predecessor, this second solo project by Labrador's Mark Nelson repeatedly processes experimental sounds with Impulz grooves until the music finally emerges from its murky beginnings in a state of clarity. "Steel Stars" for example, opens with a muted bass line and a muffled keyboard melody which is offset by a piercing, undulating drone. Gradually a luscious sound

trunk materialises from these semi-abstract elements, turning on a minimalist sound loop. "K Laminar" similarly merges sounds in a three-way exchange between machine noise, keyboard melody and ubiquitous pulse beats.

What distinguishes this release from his solo debut is his choice of collaborators. Haino Parker and Al Sparhawk of Low lend distinctive harmonies to the bass-heavy ambience of "Cold" and Chicagoan trumpeter Rob Patank features on "Double Ball" and "Both Ends Free". He contributes a busy, lively solo and draws out quivering notes to the former, and a more

such as Gong and Catalogue, plus his occasional music for film and dance, have earned him something resembling cult status in France. As an improviser coming primarily from rock, Paurois could be drawn with Fred Frith. Certainly his work with former artist-tembleur Jacques Boncompagni is arguably as powerful as Frith's short-lived trio Mascotte. But while the British avant-garde's discography has long passed the hundred mark, Paurois has released a mere handful of hard-to-find albums on labels such as Spelax and Nais, such as his recent *Paroisse Rouge*, with Makoto Sato and Pansien Hwe. Notes legend Jean-Marie Foucault

Last year he recorded some tracks with Key Hana, including one on the *Batofar*, a megachurch-centered lightship moored permanently on the Seine in front of Dominique Perrault's giant impersonal French National Library. The music captured that memorable evening strategies against architecture, anyone? — features on "I," and it's what John Peel used to call a "downhome traditional bang-ly." Paurois matches Hana long for its in a truly ecstatic meeting of minds. It's only marred by the inclusion (Paurois's idea?) of Gong veteran Francis Casseuse on drums, who is way out of his depth and woefully unable to compete in terms of sheer stamina. Shame Tony Williams weren't available. Even so, it's a landmark album for Paurois and a valuable addition to the vast Hana discography.

Paurois's other spinning partners over the years have included Jacques as diverse as Rhyx Charpentier, Woppe Dey, Arto Lindsay, Elio Parker and ex-Modern Lover Emme Brooks (on 1993's *Musées Pour Anne Dreyfus*). Bassist Brooks again plays alongside Paurois on *Alphaville*, the latest offering from an artist even less prolific than the guitarist — singer/writer/lim maker Michel Bulteau. After two mythic albums with his group Mahogany (Iran, Bulteau settled in New York and befriended the likes of William Burroughs, Alan Vega, Pat Smith and Lou Reed, whose growling imbued his work with an authentic sense of urban apocalypse) No Wave gloom, cross-pollinated with Anton Artaud-like violence. Unlike Reed, he can actually read demerol, and Paurois is content to underpin the extraordinary texts with discreet but chillingly sinister harmonic substrata on his trademark bowed guitar. To quote Paurois, "The inner ear is an ergonomic zero without limit," and what the assembled company get up to here proves him right.

DAN WARRINGTON

The Residents

Refused. The Pirimage Of Santa Dog Through The Second Millennium

BALPH AMERICA/RIP 1231

Santa Dog was The Residents' first record, which they released as a Christmas card in 1972 under the separate names of Ivory And The Brainsavers, Delta Nudes. The College

Walkers and Art And Omega featuring The Singing Lawn Chairs. Pressed up in an edition of 400 copies, the record comprised four songs on two 7" singles, packaged in an elaborately hand-printed and varnished gatefold sleeve. Unfortunately, many copies of the sleeve stuck together — forcing owners to rip it off and stick it at the music inside and to shelve original vinyls. The Residents mailed a copy to their hero Frank Zappa (who never replied), and then President Richard Nixon, whose aides returned his copy unopened after first stamping "REFUSED" on the package. The Residents shrugged their shoulders and started work on their debut album *Mute: The Residents*. The bones of Santa Dog, meanwhile, were temporarily shelved.

Further variations on the Santa Dog theme were released by the group in 1978's 1988, 1992 (and this version) 1999, for which an extra four analogical songs have been added, totaling with a 99 percent of the original recordings "File," to mark their 21st anniversary entry into the third Christian millennium.

Refused brings the entire Santa Dog saga up to date by rounding them all up, including the unfinished 1984 version, on one disc. But the original still shines brightest. This sleek plunge into the Residents' primal creative juices sounds totally alien, with its loams with just human emotion. The theme order given out by Art And Omega on "Aircraft Damage" to "Kod" can't sound infected with traces of Woody Python humour, but any silliness is quickly quashed, as the song evolves into a dad-rock statement worthy of Scott Weathers. No wonder many of the recipients of that first Santa Dog shuddered in disbelief and then went out.

More than two decades later, The Residents themselves are still trying to shake this particular hellhound from their trail. Yet they find themselves irresistibly drawn towards its secret power.

DEW PUGHLEY

Janek Schaefer

Out

(RCA) 602 4304 10

With music that rarely articulates a sense of environmental space, it's no surprise to learn that Janek Schaefer is an architect. He's one of a number of futurists to leave the bcs and reflexes of rock behind and reconnect to an earlier musical concrete tradition. A locked groove collaboration with fellow turntablist Philip Jack is forthcoming.

Accounting for half this 60 minute disc, "Concussion Five" opens with pops, crackles and the sounds of rocks colliding in tectonic readjustment, before windy drums suggest the blackness of some subterranean void. Radio signals and an unhappy choir join the mix in a reserved snail's pace before transforming into the sparks of night insects. "Concussion Five" takes things into outer space, with a liberal casting of 50s electronic beeps and whistles added to the vinyl japs

and gurgles. Schaefer's careful, organic approach to the slowly evolving material ensures that it's never too far away from the sort of trippy kosmische electronica beloved of the 70s. Nonetheless, the rhythmic stick grooves and occasionally gaseous noise reconnect to more recent librett and experimental sampling games. If towards the end it occasionally gets a little overthought, Schaefer generally deserves our gratitude for his admirable sense of sonic architecture.

BRIAN DOUGLAS

Alexander Von Schlippenbach & Tony Oxley

Digger's Harvest

FMP 101 CD

Schlippenbach Trio

Complete Combination

FMP 106 CD

Digger's Harvest is most immediately, the magnificent sound of technique enlivened as the surge of the event takes into Oxley and Schlippenbach's awesome musical resources. The event with the Total Music Meeting held at Berlin's Podium in November 1998. Percussionist and pianist, both born in 1938, grapple tirelessly with muscle and imagination. Schlippenbach's powerful churning and fractured bass figures feed right-hand elaborations steeped unthinkably in ancestral jazz memories, but with different accents. Cecil Taylor's favoured drummer Tony Oxley is further out, more abstract, less allusive, yet every bit as physical and unthinkably inevitable. His lashing and irregular punctuation consistently modifies and adds further complexity to Schlippenbach's densely clustered phrases and disjointed lines. Two extended pieces frame four more restrained ones, allowing plenty of variation overall in terms of pace and intensity.

The cover for Digger's Harvest is a painting by Oxley. It's wild contrasts, concentrations of activity and explosively coloured transfigurations of biomorphic forms suggest music with his percussion work. Paul Lowens did the cover of Complete Combination, a diagram of a deconstructed engine, which is humming when compared to his functionally precise drumming with the Schlippenbach Trio. Lowens is a punchy player, busy yet attentive, and never flashy. His understated contributions lend his more movable partners Schlippenbach on piano and even Parker on tenor and soprano saxophones, with a string of shrewdly placed percussive knots.

This trio first recorded for FMP in 1972. The line that took hold on their debut, *Polaris* (Pommes), is understated but more lightly channelled on the set, recorded in Berlin in April 1998. Lowens is discreetly sustaining on the 44 minute time piece, subtly curbing and shaping during the CD's remaining suite, the

30 minute "Fluets 1-7". Parker and Schlippenbach give signature performances throughout, recognisably themselves at every turn, yet never formulaic or detrimental to the trio's identity. If the term free jazz still has any currency, it's down to vibrantly charged and inventive recordings like these.

JULIAN COWLEY

Soft Machine

Noxette

CUBEPORN RUM130 CD

Soft Machine's classic double album *Third* (CBS 1970) signalled a new jazz rock direction for this legendary British group. Robert Wyatt's vocal on "Broken in June" was a first reminder that the Softs had formerly been purveyors of witty, whimsical, sometimes surreal Progressive rock songs. This early jazz rock phase is preserved on Noxette, a previously unreleased live recording from Farlie Hall, Croydon on 4 January 1970, the first full-length disc to feature the shortened (just two months) current of Elton Dean, Hugh Hopper, Mike Ratledge, Robert Wyatt and Lyn Dobson (half the remnant of a short-lived septet). The presence of the lesser known Dobson (soprano sax and flugel), makes Noxette an aficionados' must-have. He was doubly useful to the Softs, wicketed readers, typing the type of versatile musician who was equally at home in the jazz, R&B and rock contexts that emerged in the late 60s.

Noxette is a reminder of the power of Soft Machine live at full-throttle, the polyrhythmic drumming of Wyatt driving the sheets-of-sound mesh of Hopper's supercharged, often fuzzed, bass guitar and Ratledge's swirling, splintered organ textures. On top of this, the Dean-Dobson sax attack makes "Mousetrap", "Nowhere", "Backwards", "Mousetrap (Reprise)" and "Hibou, Anemone And Bear" (all finally sequenced a thrilling 20 minutes). Dobson plays a surprisingly gritty flute solo over Wyatt's wailing organ on "Backwards", while Dean's Liverpool acid peeps on "12345" a brisk Hopper tune making its first disc appearance.

CHRIS BLACKFORD

Sun Ra & His Solar Myth

Arkestra

Life Is Splendid

TOTAL ENERGY NEB323 CD

Sun Ra & His

Intergalactic Arkestra

Outer Space Employment Agency

TOTAL ENERGY NEB321 CD

Two performances recorded at Michigan's Ann Arbor Blues & Jazz Festival in 1972 and 73 respectively, have been released on CD for the first time, and each containing some of the widest music committed to tape by Sun Ra and his enigmatic band of offworld gods.

Looking back, 1972 seems to have been a

Various Artists

Jazzsubset!

ORFALY NEW 1 873 302D

This elegantly boxed triple CD, subtitled "a collection of avant garde/free jazz/psychodelia from the BYG/Actuel catalogue of 1969-1971", is the result of Sonic Youth guitarist Thurston Moore and writer Byron Coley's combined interest and obsession with that important 60s French jazz label, and serves as an instant primer to the 52 albums it eventually released. In fact, eight of these (Don Cherry's *Mu First Part/Second Part*, Archie Shepp's *Blasé/Live At Pan-African Festival*, Art Ensemble Of Chicago's *A Jackson In Your House/Messia To Our Folks*, and Sun Ra's *Solar Myth Approach Vols 1 & 2*) have been released simultaneously on four separate CDs.

More than just a random collection of tracks taken from a set of slightly warped vinyl curios, however, *Jazzsubset!* has a tale to tell which further illuminates Val Wilmer's recently republished history of the 60s free jazz movement *As Serious As Your Life*. Those involved include a host of legendary US free jazz icons such as Sunny Murray, Archie Shepp, Sun Ra and Anthony Braxton (to name a few), lesser known (but equally important) players like Sonny and Linda Sharrock, Clifford Thornton, Grachan Monore III, Frank Wright, Arthur Jones, Jimmy Lyons and Allen Silva; together with a select gathering of European jazz artists, avant garde musicians and underground rock acts whose individual styles echoed the revolutionary changes which were taking place in world politics and the arts at that crucial time.

In 1968 few free jazz musicians in America could find either a record company, or an audience who would listen to them. Despite the gentle encouragement of such rock venues as Bill Graham's East and West Coast Fillmore dancehalls, Cheet Helms's Family Dog and Russ Galt's Grande Ballroom in Detroit, which occasionally featured jazz names like Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, Roberson Roland Kirk, Cecil Taylor and Sun Ra as headline or support, the free jazz movement was largely ignored or unheard of. This response resulted in a mass exodus of US free jazz players to Europe, many ending up in Paris, which had then become the centre for jazz and avant garde music. In Europe during the late 60s the 'new music' had taken root and blossomed to produce a dizzying series of fabled live gigs and recording sessions, some of which were caught and documented by labels like Sun, Shandar, Palm, American tenor saxophone player Frank Wright's part owned Cent Of The World and, more prominently, BYG/Actuel.

Telling as borne from the initials of its three founders Fernand Bosson (who left shortly afterwards to pursue other activities), Jean-Luc Young and Jean Georgarakis, BYG started out by releasing select titles from US jazz label Savoy. One day Young and

Steve Lacy (left), Don Cherry and long haired friend



Karakos were introduced to jazz drummer Claude Decoo, who also edited the avant garde journal *Actuel*, and between them they decided to form a joint label which would capture the raw energy of free jazz while it was still fresh and vital. Decoo's passion for the music put him in contact with some of the major figures of the genre including The Art Ensemble Of Chicago and Archie Shepp, who was persuaded to come to Paris by *Actuel* photographer Jacques Becqre while on assignment to cover the Pan-African festival in Algeria. Other free spirits followed, and in the month of August 1969 a mammoth recording session was organised, where the small army of musicians who had descended on Paris would turn up with their instruments to play and interact with each other, while Young and his associates recorded the proceedings for posterity.

It is from this wealth of material that the present compiles have drawn to fill up their 'Jazzsubset' box. This is a labour of love which must also have seemed daunting due to the sheer volume of great music that was made available to them. Disc One immediately pushes the listener in at the deep end and holds their head under with a thrilling blast of unshackled improv from a sextet led by former Albert Ayler and Cecil Taylor drummer Sunny Murray. Urged on by Murray's pleading skin-thrashing, the roaring nucleus of 'Red Cross' blares from Arthur Jones, Roscoe Mitchell and Kenneth Terroade's combined alto and tenor horn bombardment which dips, dives and intensifies towards a vein popping climax. In direct contrast to Murray's high energy outburst is fellow drummer Robert Wyatt's exquisitely laidback playing and vocal on a version of the Soft Machine standard 'Memories' (recorded in London) where he is accompanied by Bananaram with Gong leader and former Softs guitarist David Allen at the helm. This song's inclusion (together with contributions elsewhere from French

avant garde unit Acting Trio, electronic ensemble MEV and a later psychedelic slice from Gong's *Carnembert Electrique* period) illustrates the label's grand diversity, where no creative pebble, regardless of colour, shape or size, was unturned.

The voices of black sisterhood were also loud enough to be heard over the barrage of screaming sax. Hearing Jeanne Lee coolly deliver the line, "You who shot your sperm into me, but never see me free", on Archie Shepp's great 'Blasé', is a beautifully defiant, testicle withering moment that is firmly bonded to the tradition of 'jazzosity'. In a more abstract form, so is Linda Sharrock's primal scream accompaniment to her husband Sonny's flaming guitar solo on 'Soon'. Her impassioned howling invites comparison with early Yoko Ono, but the flow of rage, pain, sorrow and love which she weaves throughout her performance belongs to her alone. Both Lee and Sharrock effectively make their mark here, and clearly show that there was also a niche for women to express themselves in the seemingly male dominated free jazz movement.

The highlight of the box, however, is the final track, which replays side six of *The Seasons*, bass player Alan Silva and his Celestial Communication Orchestra's big band extravaganza which was originally released as a triple album. Featuring a galaxy of global free jazz stars, Silva's towering creation is a permanent testament to the power and resilience of the new music, and a beacon which illuminates what the entire month long recording session (together with the three day festival at Annecy which followed it) was all about. Playing music and embracing freedom were two obviously important aspects, but so was the human factor. The deep humanity, originality and brilliance that shines through these painstakingly restored recordings proves that the BYG/Actuel experiment was an unparalleled success.

EDWIN POUNCEY

particularly intense year for Ra and The Arkestra. Temporarily based in California and with the assistance of director John Cone, Ra had begun shooting the scenes that would eventually be assembled into the extraordinary Score for The Place as described by biographer John F. Sowell as "part documentary, part science fiction, part blacktopian, part surrealistic biblical epic." The film and its soundtrack would provide much of the music and philosophical grounding for The Arkestra's performances over the next couple of years, including the two documented here. The same year Ra signed a contract with ABC/Amulet to reissue the already labyrinthine Saturn back catalogue and record a raft of new music, the deal would later go sour, but not before Ra had produced four new albums and Impulse! had re-released another ten (Saturn titles). In addition, and while maintaining a weekly residency at New York's notorious Sugar Sessions, The Arkestra had started to receive bookings from high profile US festivals, including Newport and John Sendar's Ann Arbor beaneaters, where they played to audiences of up to 15,000 and shared the bill with Junior Walker & The All Stars, Herbie Wolf and Howard Dog Taylor.

The performances on both these CDs seem to reflect this overarching mood of good times a-cornin': the music progresses with a dancing insouciance you want to scream right along with the fucking life-affirming joy of it all.

Each CD contains in microcosm the elements that defined the Arkestra's repertoire of the period: detourned gospel melodies and snappy slogans for the space age courtesy of John Tyson and The Space Ethnic Voices, withering solo Hoag and organ passages, sanctifier sax from John Gilmore and Marshall Allen, hair-raising percussion jams that move forward with the hurricane force of a hydro-head dervish, issuing waste to everything in its path — all segued into an extensive custom-made to expand and liberate old, world-sized sense.

In his sleeveless John Sendar revels in the inventory of the atmosphere of these shows, recurring theme as mind-blowing multimedia spectacles characterised by "brightly coloured costumes, leaping dancers, exotic percussion chimes and space vocal chorales — a splendorous tapestry of sound and light the likes of which had never been seen or heard before." The light might have gone out on Ra, but the sound remains — glorious and undimmed.

TONY HERRINGTON

U-clef

Habitat
APRILMENT 22 (CD, 12)

"I got the feeling in London more than anywhere else of being isolated as a musician who naturally needs to be with other musicians to create the notes," writes U-clef

aka Yousef Adel, in his own sleeve-note commentary to the track "Habit Monk." It's unfortunate that a lot of people just work from a home-based studio by themselves. The track itself is a very effective jazy dub mix of Moroccan flutes.

U-clef's street-talking HipHop persona might be very West London, but he was born in the Moroccan capital Rabat. What powers his album is the tension between the high-tech braininess of the Western producer and the richly communal street musics of North Africa. U-clef's own version of exotic propels him to fuse Berber, Gnawa and Andalusian traditions with the Jungle, dub and HipHop he loves and breathes in London. The result is raw, imaginative and clearly a project from the heart. U-clef's fascination with the wide variety of musics he encounters in Morocco is apparent. He is eager to distinguish his music from what he calls the "18-10 exotic bubble, clogging up the circuit," but as a producer he has a light touch that keeps him firm from the over-earmest musics now. At times, he needs to be forgiven down the path like the closing "Gnawed" on which a rhythmically frenetic Gnawa musician is forcibly pinned down to a bit of London beat. But there are plenty of inspired moments, too like the loping bass and charming Alsatian woman on "Tagazout".

CLIVE BELL

Frances-Marie Uitti & Mark Dresser

Concerto
CENTROGRAMMA (CD, 12)

"A champion of the art of the duet" is how Elliott Sharp's sleeve-note describes this album recorded in 1996 and 1997 by cellist Uitto and bassist Dresser. But it defies any expectations you might hold for their instrumental combination — this pair achieves an almost orchestral range of sonorities without any electronic treatment. At Sharp also notes, the music concludes us partly because of the players' virtuosity in extended techniques. Although the album forms a kind of suite of seven pieces, each track undergoes a metamorphosis. Their improvisation is fluid, evanescent and elusive.

At best, describing each track can only give a flavour of the music found there. But some landmarks can be discerned and the constant, absorbing transformations. The opening title track begins as a soundscape, but ambient tendencies are soon swallowed up in a zone of increasing urgency. "Grati" initially has a picaresque bias, underlining the most conventionally melodic approach of any track, while Uitto's viola is minimalist, and vibrant later. But the most subliminal in the music fragments into dark, dissonant areas.

"La Finestra" has some of the most remarkable effects, with high-pitched pluckings turning into guitar-like strummings. It's hard to tell which instrument is doing what, given their often extreme registers. But

then it's often hard to tell the instruments apart, as sounds converge and diverge seamlessly. "Montebello" opens with a saw-sawing, wheezing motion, with a suggestion of tango. Uniquely propulsive, it rises to a pitch of intensity equalled only by the turbulence at the close of "La Finestra". There's a warmth, and beauty in these remarkable performances, but you have to listen a few times to notice.

ANDY HAMILTON

Volcano The Bear

The Inheres Decline
UNITED STATES (CD, 12)

A shock eruption from the almost extinct UK rock underground, Volcano The Bear's lava is sourced from both the magma of mid-70s rock-in-agitation and the smelgia of 19th-century 80s industrialism. These seemingly inconceivable substances merge in the crucible heat of VTB's fervent invention. Their catalogue of crude electric jangling and hammering synths gives way to gutting electronics and soft guitars, which are in turn disassembled by a thundering physical drum attack, and so on through a fitted-out tunnel lined with weird, glowing instrumentals and scattered bands.

What with their wacky name, wilfully oblique album title and label choice (Nurse With Wound's label), evidently winning friends doesn't top VTB's agenda. And singing nonsense in a quavery English, lissajou just so no one will mistakenly think they mean it, man is decidedly backwards thinking for anyone who is not Robert Wyatt, or Charles Hayward. But in heavily stacking the odds against themselves, they turn out to be consummate provincial hackers who cheekily run away with the jacket.

BIBA KOFF

Susumu Yokota

Magis Thread
LSD (VINYL, 12)

"Somewhere in the process of evolution the spinning and weaving of thread became possible for humankind," writes Susumu Yokota on the first European release of his 1998 CD *Magis Thread*. "How did this come to pass?" And the answer is — not much help really in getting a handle on the extraordinary yet evasive web of his Flutes electronic.

Since he evacuated Acid Jazz Ambient and all the other subgenres along the Tokyo-London-Detroit-Chicago axis, his music has gone into freefall and ended up in a warm nest months before the disco. He is now producing vibrant forms whose fluid shapes are contained in single-lined coils floating dreamily in amniotic fluid, even as they unknowingly gravitate towards each other in rhythmic springs of life. The most compelling pieces here pick up on and amplify those strings, muffled pulses. Reflex

is a simple yet tremendous leaving rhythm rising from a season of electronic near-silence. Four tracks later on "Potenza" that same delirious has evolved into a more complex creature taking limits that insistively reach out and punch kicks or pluck at gutters. On "Motes" the music, with static and impermanence, a ecstasy of communication. Still nine months before the disco, delusion has not yet kicked in.

BIBA KOFF

Otomo Yoshihide

Cathode
TADPOLE 12 (VINYL, 12)

The four tracks on Cathode see workaholic avant-garde Otomo moving in yet another new direction, this time incorporating traditional Japanese instruments. There is of course a tradition of this kind of thing from the mid-60s onwards, experimental composers like Toru Takemitsu and Toshio Kihara increasingly incorporated gagaku ensembles, koto and shakuhachi into their music. That trend mirrored comparable rediscoveries and mutations of the tradition in other arts: a rejection of the century old idea that modernism had to equal Westernisation. But while Takemitsu (Otomo notes in the sleeve-notes) that the colours of "Cathode #1" are evoked by the composer's film music, he often accused of mere eclecticism for his use of traditional instruments, Otomo almost succeeds in reinventing them in an electronic context.

Most impressive are "Modulation #1" and "Modulation #2", recorded in real-time with no overdubbing or editing. Both pieces explore the uncanny resonance between the high-pitched tones of a sine-wave generator (played by Sachiko Mi) and the shō, a type of mouth organ used in gagaku. "Modulation #2" adds a slowly increasing figure played out on acoustic guitar by Tetsuo Imahori, and some oblique electronic flutters that bring to mind Jim O'Rourke's Happy Days piece for guitar and hand-punch. Where the interest really lies though is the modulating tones between sinewaves and shō. Their subtle pulsing, which varies according to the listener's position in relation to the speakers and the environment, is disorientating yet gorgeous to behold. The simplicity of the conception in no way detracts from the emotional effect.

The two "Cathode" pieces feature a larger ensemble, including the deeply toned fukuro-shamisen normally used in bunraku puppet theatre, violin, cello and contrabass. On Cathode #11, separate performances from a studio session were mixed into a whole by analogue tape manipulation. The second piece does the same but digitally. However, as unusual as it is to hear the distinctly prebabe shamisen in any sort of avant-garde context, the structure remains frustratingly sparse. A shame amongst nontheaters.

ALAN CUFFINGS

the boomerang

New reissues: rated on the rebound

Last year, the Dutch Calibre label embarked on a wholesale reissue of the catalogue of Bernard Stollman's ESP-CD imprint, which in the mid-60s effectively became the house label for New York's subterranean free jazz and outsider rock communities (see *The Wire* 157). Now the CDs, which have been remastered (well and repackaged [not so well]), are being made available in the UK, and the first batch includes at least two stone-cold classics of 60s outsider art. When it was released in 1964, **The Albert Ayler Trio: Sonnet Unity** (GET5-022 LP) given voice to a personal vision so occult that it seemed to emerge straight from the Book of Revelations rather than any cool, bourgeois notions of an avant garde. The combination of Gary Peacock's wargamous basslines, Sunny Murray's strabefied rhythms, and Ayler's heartrending sax fry, which speaks in tongues both alien and familiar, sounds wholly organic and intuitive a meeting three way communion between hyperintelligent telepaths struggling to articulate Ayler's apocalyptic message. By contrast **Cromagnon's Orgasm** (2001 CD) sounds like Frank Zappa's scowling dismissal of post-Woodstock communal hippie music (let's all play bongos in the dirt) made flesh. The "triumph" of Austin Gomiere and Brian Elster, a pair of disaffected hard NYC songwriters, the record is a ludicrous but endearing mix of tribal percussion workouts, pulsing songforms, suffraging lyrics and wayward electronics and tapeworks. Easily wilded certainly, but as a period piece itokes

some beating. What's more, today you can stick it alongside such similarly dented records as Phloz: *Ono Band* and Rolo *Ethiopia* as a template for all manner of current underground rock, from Pelt to Richard Youngs and beyond.

If you can't wait around for Calibre to reissue **The Albert Ayler Quintet's** ESP release *Slap's Solon* (May 7 1966), the Italian Cramps label has recently released it in a 180 gramme vinyl edition (GET 10 1B LP). The record features one of Ayler's least documented groups, a quartet featuring brother Donald on trumpet, bassist Lewis Wornell, the young Ron the Ronald Shamoni (Shamoni on drums, and veiled Michael Sampson, a Raguette for the Village Vanguard set. The recording is bawdy at best, and Wornell hardly figures in the mix, but the antique sound takes the quality of the music, which is simultaneously sassy-tinted and flecked with cosmic drat. Typically, the songs lit off from a dusty repertoire derived from old tummy ballrooms. Baptist sermons and New Orleans funeral dirges, but they are soon biased into hitnato unknown dimensions by the mystery black notes emanating from the Ayler brothers' collective improvisations.

The LP is part of Cramps's ongoing Get Back reissue series, which is making available any number of obscure new-musica documents from the 60s and 70s, all on heavy-duty vinyl and packaged in thick cardboard facsimiles of the original sleeves. The latest batch of releases to make it to the UK includes **John Cage's** 1976 *Choir* (GET6-117 LP), a solo piano work of crushing banality/lighted beauty (let's be as appropriate).

Derek Bailey's *Diferano No 2* (GET5-022 LP) which contains 14 typically pithy electric guitar improvisations recorded in 1976, and best of all, *Musica Su Schermi* (GET109 LP), an ultra-rare mid-70s document

of the legendary Italian improvising collective **Gruppo Di Improvizzazione Nuova Contemporanea**. The group had its roots deep in Europe's post-war avant-garde, and included Ennio Morricone, moonlighting from his career as the hardest working composer in showbusiness. On the three part

"Scheme", alien sounds move randomly through terse space, sounding like a hyperabsterged version of Morricone's contemporary scores for movies by Sergio Leone and Dario Argento. "Dramma A Giacomo Solfi", on the other hand, is a 16 minute drone-work that rises through various levels of intensity and disquiet, beginning with low register legato trombone phrases and rumbling bass piano notes which are then strayed by high-end brass multiphonics, clanging the ritual sounds of alarm before fading back into the humming silence.

In 1977 **Richard Hell & The Voidoids** Blank Generation (Sire/Warner 7599261 372 CD) was seen as the epitome of bad robot Apple prancer punk. Hell's literary chutzpah and gaudy Bob Quine's jazzy postcard drive the *Scumcore* a little out of 1-2-3-4 boominess or insufferably arch nihilism? 23 years on, it sounds reassuringly not Hell's DIY Hausman project, replete with mandatory NYC vampire tropes ("I've lined with silk"), sounds like a womb-dance enacted against adult disappointments, "Love Comes In Spurts" not seely-cynical but tender-brained, a teen poetry nerd's Romantic ideas dashed by one night with the Real. This three chord daisiac gives way to funkoid thrash on a few run through the jungle of John Fogerty's "Walking On The Water" — a stand out anyway, the band's back. *Blank Generation* stands up as a song cycle whole — an extended quarrel between rock-as-like-force versus the terminal consoling (punk nihilism) of retreat.

Recorded over three nights in August 1964, **John Foley's** *The Grace Of Death And Other Plorations* (Fonit/Columbia TAKB909 CD) has been remastered with four bonus tracks from the same sessions. Drawing instrumental licks from Doo, Bagg, Willie Brown, Bukka White and others, Foley was beginning to make atmospheric forays away from his blues and Country influences.

What emerges are strange, flowing, tubsome melodic pieces in open guitar tunings. The picking is generally steady and terse rather than fancy, but Foley coaxes a satzily lyricalism from the material, drawing it out into long, hypnotic patterns.

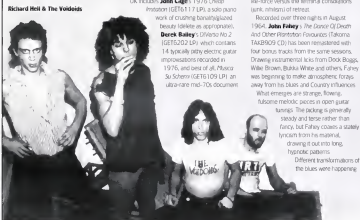
Different transformations of the blues were happening

further out West in the mid-60s, where colossal amounts of mind-altering substances accelerated the morphing of green folkies and jagheads into San Francisco blossom drinkers like **Quicksilver Messenger Service**.

His name accurately describes the cobra cooing dionys of their two leads, the tremolo-loaded John Hopkins and the more introverted Gary Duncan, and their rescalated rhythm section. The splendid *Unreleased Lost Gold And Silver* (Collectors' Choice Music CPM1092 2x2CD) draws on an infamous 1968 concert bootleg, *Madon Of The Canyon Floor*, for extended workouts of Howlin' Wolf's "Smokestack Lightning", Willie Dixon's "Backdoor Man" and their staple, "Who Do You Love", which capture SP's LSD mindfuck euphoria far more successfully than their official recordings. The bonus CD of demos and outtakes also has its (less potent) charms. Recorded between February and April 1979, *Produkt Der Deutsch-Amerikanischen Freundschaft* (Hate DAFD CD) finds an early version of BAF (without vocalist Gae Delgado-Lopez) rehearsing to a pub in the forest outside Düsseldorf and creating a racket that's got nothing to do with friendship, German-American or otherwise. The 22 instruments of their lost debut album — some mimenty fragments and scribbles — are rioty, aptly soaked of guitar anthems, saddy electronics, reusous feedback and pulsant drums that blurt and blare in the face of the Marshall Plan.

The trend for reissuing funk records so obscure that the musicians themselves probably never heard them continues apace with the latest rudies from San Francisco's Luv N' Haght Records. Judging from the sleeve art of *Luv The Sun Shine In Luv N' Haght* (LHD34 CD), **Sons And Daughters Of Luv** were the house band of Oakland's Black Party or Party At their best, on tracks like "A Real Thing", "Darkness Junkies" and, believe it or not, "Operation Feed Yourself", the group worked up a decent version of that Weldon Irvine fusion grove. Elsewhere, though, the sub-Abbey Lincolnisms and mellow vibes make you remember why no one wears dashiks anymore.

Eschewing the back-to-Africa gear for Technicolor pimp splendour, Indianapolis **Turner Brothers** follow a more traditional funk soul route on act 1 *Luv N' Haght* (LHD33 CD). However, there's plenty of wilderness to recommend it: the funkies mid-70s keyboard intro and subdued who-with-off of "Cause I Love You", the singer trying to woo his girl on "Let's Go Father" — and yes there is a line about "getting hooded" — the percolating, vaguely Afro-ish groove of "Please The People", the great, undercovered break of "Sweetest Thing In The World", and the utterly preposterous "Sound Of The Taurus" — they just don't make 'em like that anymore. (Reviewed by Matt Jynche, Tony Herrington, David Keenan, Mike Kead, Ian Periman and Peter Sharro).



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in brief **avant rock**

Reviewed by **Tom Ridge**

AMP Studio Alien Registration

Offshore scores 000011 CD

Philosopher's Stone Apparatus

Essential 0000015 CD

Not to be confused with his AMP collective,

AMP Studio is mainman Richard Walker's

home recording project. It is distinguished by

a more abstract, esoteric feel, where song

based structures dissolve into distorted

Ambient noise, loops and samples. The edges

might be blurred, but a noisy blanket of

crackle and hiss ensures the music's gritty

surface. Ex-AMP member Gareth Mitchell's

Philosopher's Stone might have lost

from Walker, but his second collection of

abstract total pieces, created by processing

and sampling guitar sounds, shares some of

AMP Studio's qualities. However, PS's

grittiness makes itself felt with the occasional

bursts of white noise and piercing whines

that break up his slow, unfolding waves of

Ambient sound.

Appliance D4 Pure Play 0011 CD

It's an obvious, but well-executed idea

getting the leading lights from the German

electronic underground to remix neo-

Krautrockers Appliance. The resulting EP offers

fascinating examples of deconstruction,

where Appliance's muscular originals are

transformed into brittle avant-funk excursions

to Roccoco Rot morph the droning "Soft

Landing" into squally electronics, Tanelier

recast "Throwing A Curve Ball" as reflective

romanticism. Kressler cut the manic "Hot

Punkst" into brittle angular shapes, and Pole

radically re-eds "Heroes Of Tomorrow" into

a hypnotic piece of melodic doom.

Emily Bezar Four Walls

Bending 0000000000 CD

This leftfield singer-songwriter from the San

Francisco Bay Area combines intricate

musical arrangements with swooning,

virtuoso vocal performances. The effect is a

bit like encountering Kate Bush jamming

with King Crimson. That is, her restless

kinetic songs are burdened with flashy solos

When Bezar delivers the flinty musicainism, as

on the ballad "Playful So" and the more

sedate "Algae Of Noon", her talent shines

more clearly.

Cyrus Rego Cyrus Rego 000000 CD

SOBAC is definitely the place where Cyrus

Rego (aka Edward Ricketts) drew it out in his

studio, when he artfully engaged with

instrumental rock outfit RJD4. Newman. What

started off as a side project using the deep

space synthesizer drones of Klaus Schulze

and Ion Tontia as his basic template) has

exploded into a more personalized galaxy of

driving soundscapes. Aided by producer Adam

Wilson (Winona) For The Derby, Cyrus Rego's

music moves like a dead asteroid from

speaker to speaker. Still, solemn and bleak, it

has a powerful presence. (Edwin Pouncy)

Doldrums Desk Trackery 000000 CD

While it doesn't always bode well when

musicians take themselves too seriously, laying

on the irony can be equally tedious. With titles

like "Free Festival Of The Stonebridge" and

"Sparking Deathbeats" and a propensity for

rambling psychedelia, Doldrums bear a retreat

from the mindboggling of their first *Shur*

album into a self-referential world of wiggled

out space rock and goopy abstractness.

Feelessly sporting digitally distorted loop-

parts on the back of their jaunily assigned

CD sleeve, Welsh group Eclogram are torn

between patching psychedelic whimsy

("Herald Spike", "Cubeluv") and pursuing a

more adventurous creative impulse, as

displayed on the ethereal "In Shadow" and the

extended last track "Spensberg", which

captures the genuine essence of psychedelia

without getting mired in its surface trappings.

Family Of God Family Of God

0000000000 CD

An elaborately packaged reissue of the duo's

1998 debut, *Family Of God* is a double

album of eclectic lounge style electronics

with occasional outbursts of tougher rhythms

and bossing atmospheres. The sleeve-side

playfully boasts that this is "the greatest

phonographic record of all time". Well, it's

certainly eclectic, and unpredictable, but

Family Of God are not nearly as witty or

clever as they think. For every amusing

detour (their skewering of Leonard

Bernstein's "America"), there's a party bore

inflicting unfunny jokes on a captive

audience.

The Fox Carnation The Fox

Carnation 0000000000 CD

From Louisville via Los Angeles, The Fox

Carnation have an ex-Sant member in

singer/guitarist Brian Hoffman, but

they're far removed from Sant's pioneering

main-rocked drives. Here they show

everything down and form songs around

pared-back rhythms, which they gradually

flesh out into swooning, epic drops, while

Hoffman's dead, husky voice rides their

reeping, melodic, underlows.

IOD Mundane Existence 000000 CD

These self-styled 'intense grimace

terrorists' from Birmingham cattle off a

snappy ten tracks in 18 minutes. Delivered

in indecipherable, guttural 'doom-forgue'

vocals, their songs reveal from the printed

page a puritanical disgust with modern life in

general and 'straight' society in particular.

Hard, fast, compressed. Most rifts and

bludgeoning percussion make for a suitable

accompaniment to their meaty poetic stew.

It's interesting to spot the stylistic trings -

neo-Sabz rhyt, hardcore punk, etc. - as

their numbers fly. The 30 second blast of

'Fifth' signs off with a typically angry lyrical

fouath, suggesting there's a humorous side

to their antagonistic stance.

Gilbert Isbin Gilbert Isbin Plays

Nick Drake 0000000000 CD

Belgian jazz guitarist Isbin performs ten

improved variations on Nick Drake originals

plus a composition of his own. After two

decades of death cult obscurity, today's

rehabilitation of Drake places as much stress

on his music as his lyrics. The two are hard to

separate, however, as Isbin isolates the music

element, removing light arpeggios, around

Drake's melodies. Occasionally his approach

is illuminating, but Drake's starker material,

such as "Roses" and "Which Will", eludes him,

and he ends up obscuring the raw qualities

that make them special. Ironically, Isbin's

own "Boymenagerie" comes closest to

realising the essence of Drake's style.

Longstone auto 0000000000 CD

The second album from Mike Ward and Mike

Cross straddles the boundary between base-

high electronics and hypnotic space rock.

Sometimes they lean towards conventional

electronic material, but overall their intriguing

mix of noise and calm pays off, especially

when their constructions of distorted samples

and white noise create the riddles of their

more considerable, longer compositions.

The bonus live EP is a mix of voice samples

scattered over an urgent rhythm track,

packed with outbursts of machine noise.

Brian McMahon & The

Kitchen Apts Youth 000000 CD

This short but sweet EP from the former

Electric Eels guitarist (not the ex-Slint man)

is the follow up to his impressive 1998 solo

debut LP *An Inch Equals A Thousand Miles*.

Sounding like an extract from a far larger

work in progress, it's four new titles offer yet

a further example of McMahon's mastery of

hulking, rocky rock. From the heavy-industry

W vibe that rattles through the title track, to

the high octave guitar lullaby of "The

Brigade" and "Lullaby Before Tears", and the

unsettlingly creepy finale "The Bishop,

White" chances are you will never have

heard anything quite like this before

(Edwin Pouncy)

Milkspop Holly Time To Come

In stereo 0000000000 CD

This is the second collection of songs from

singer-songwriter Mara Flier and multi-

instrumentalist and arranger Kramer. Flier's

voice is undeniably engaging, and Kramer's

production and arrangements are sweetly

forceful, but the whole is a bit very same.

Kramer's synths and restrained electric guitar

embellishes her basic acoustic strumming,

but he can't do much for the song's lack of

dynamism. Some tracks do improve upon

their debut. "Cowards" has the hypnotic

quality of earlier Kramer protégés Galilee

SOO, and "Ocean Gravel" has a more serene

edge. That the latter is the only song co-

written with Kramer suggests that closer

collaboration would yield better results.

16 Horsepower Secret South

0000000000 CD

This Denver quartet uses traditional forms

and instruments in a dynamic modern setting

is a way that elevates them above the mass

of Neil Young and Tom Petty wannabes

clipping up the current alt Country scene.

For their third album, 16 Horsepower fully

embrace a darker sensibility, infusing their

take on Country and folk songs with a gothic

sweep. Like a more subtle Gun Club, or a

less literary Nick Cave, this is an inventive

alternative reading of American roots music.

Doug Snyder & Bob

Thompson The Rules Of Play

0000000000 CD

The 45 minute improvised title track

dominates this release. Thompson's delectable

drumming and Snyder's equally skillful guitar

play off one another throughout. Thompson

sets the pace, alternating passages of

relative calm with all-out blister. Snyder's

guitar is more prominent, coming over too

clinical and burnished at times, but he offers

his little serifs with little melodic

clusters. The two shorter tracks are less

tempting but easier to like, featuring restraint

over endurance.

Storm And Stress Under

Thunder And Fluorescent Light

0000000000 CD

The way this Chicago and New York based

trio displays a fundamental disregard of the

conventions of rhythm and structure on their

second album places them at the vanguard

of exploratory rock. Its nearest relative is last

year's LP *More Apple Album Material*, but Storm

And Stress are more subtle, combining Jon

Williams' croon with tightly compressed

guitar fibrillations and drumming

accompaniment so loose it's comically on

the point of disintegration. The effect is coolly

engaging, generating a bizarre internal logic

from unlikely sources.

in brief classical

Reviewed by Julian Cowley

Hélène Breschand Harpiste
AS 5015180 CD

With Luciano Behos Sequenzia which opens this solo harp set, Breschand signals her allegiance to the gestural expansiveness of the 1950s avant garde. John Cage's meditative In A Landscape discloses another facet of the Roman harpist's playing. Three improvisations, plus composers by Yoshida Taro and Tori-Tsui Tiet, sustain the balance between conceptual boldness and nuanced delicacy of execution.

Morton Feldman Crippled Symmetry 1988/89/90/91/92 CD
Few composers have derived so much benefit from the advent of the CD as Morton Feldman. The subdued dynamics and extended durations of his later work are especially well served by the format. Crippled Symmetry (1983), lasting about an hour and a half, is less a piece of art and listen to than an exquisite acoustic environment to move around in. California Ear Unit members, Dorothy Stein on flute, percussion, Arthur Jammern and Vicki Ray on piano and cello bring a certain toughness and durability to the music's fragile patterns.

George Flynn Trinity south-west
SC5001 2XCD
Chicago based Flynn composes and plays sagely articulate piano music. Kinar (1968), Wound (1976), and Salvage (1993) were initially conceived and eventually completed as parts of Trinity, a web essay on violence and reconciliation. Salvage appears here for the first time. The other pieces, produced by pioneering electronics composer Than Maningia, have been issued before. Taken together the effect is at once fiery and repressive, monumental yet charged at all points with constructive energy.

Henryk Mikolaj Górecki
Totus Tuus/Chorus I/Maestros
KODJ SCHWANN 37201 CD
Written in 1987 for a papal visit to Poland, Totus Tuus is handsily serene. Maestros (1987), also scored for uncomplicated choir, is typically gradual and understated. But Chorus I, composed in 1964 for 56 strings, is a welcome reminder that Górecki is an exact contemporary of Krzysztof Penderecki, and once shared his commitment to working with unorthodox orchestral sonorities. Yet then as now he favoured a writer, accommodating broad gestures rather than intricate detail.

Philip Grange Dark Labyrinths
BLACK BOX 801038 CD

Philip Grange is a professor of composition at Exeter University. The opening piece is a tribute to Peter Maxwell Davies, one of his own teachers. Elsewhere, his inspiration is literary with settings of poems by Edward Thomas and Robert Louis Stevenson, and lessons drawn from the narrative practice of Umberto Eco, William Golding and Lawrence Durrell. As a whole, The German Ensemble is owed to the technical requirements and expressive demands of these tense, polished compositions.

Gerdjeff/De Hartmann
Music For The Movement
CHAMEL CLOSING 00515 2XCD

GI Gerdjeff was one of the 20th century's best-known transmitters of ecstatic lore yet seems he considered himself primarily a teacher of dance. Music to accompany his choreographed 'movements' is presented here by pupils Wim Van Duillman. The themes were Gerdjeff's, the notation and harmonisation were made by his regular collaborator Thomas De Hartmann. As all previous recordings of this work by pupils including Keith Jarrett, Cecil Lytle and Horbati Reek, the surprise is how sombre and ponderous these gentle, Eurasian folk-tongued pieces sound, considering they're intended as dance music.

Steve Heimbecker Anthology
The Enormousness Of Clot
Machines overseas.com/anthology 5106 2XCD

Canadian sound artist Heimbecker creates unusually spacious and unforced montages. They may be reflections of his prone yodelling, but they are incredibly products of his 'sound sliding' technique—focusing open microphones in the sound space to generate frequency feedback loops as they are processed through digital delays. Voice and breath, gentle environmental sounds, small machines and a sense of humour are key ingredients. Much of it feels boundless, yet electroacoustic composition is rarely so habitable as here.

If, Bwana Clara Noctua noctua
R2101910 CD

An hour long piece for mixed ensemble, 106-476 of them in fact, conjured up through multiple tracking. That density intensified by Alan Margolis's screeched up and slowed down manipulations of initially improvised material, results in a prolonged subterranean mumble, without a trace of

the source instrument's intrinsic reediness. It has something of the character of Blane Radigue's enveloping drone pieces, consoled or menacing according to the listener's mood.

Richard Lerman A Matter Of Scale And Other Precious Anomalous Utterings CD

A San Francisco-born sonic explorer and video artist, Lerman is dedicated to making objects sound. He amplifies stinky coils and hurls his own 'brinkies', using Piezo electric transducer discs and hairshock wire. On this recording he also makes microphones react to a small propane torch and plays amplified bicycle alongside Tom Hamilton's synthesizer and Bertrand Moon's guitar. A Matter Of Scale documents four performances staged between 1981 and 1997, including one in the Houston Astrodome. Essential listening for lovers of granular metallic music and spacious whispering.

Chris Newman Sad Secrets/New French Tunes
CONTRAST 5046105 CD

Contemporary classical music's most engaging live act, Chris Newman manages to push his ardent art songs beyond banality to a point where instead explicitly revives Henrik Lowenhielm's piano accompanies the composer's unashamedly dead vocalising. At times on Sad Secrets Newman sounds like a karaoke Peter Dinklage impersonator singing Hoffmann parodies. New French Tunes is music: thinned out and stripped absurdly bare, somehow it is as fascinating as it is often irritating.

Jocelyn Robert Cursed Gods
overseas.com/cursed 5114 CD

Jocelyn Robert's enhanced audio verté compositions are structured to uncover the latent meaning of the American way of life at least as it is lived in "a typical afternoon in the backyard in Phoenix, Arizona". Routine sounds are configured sometimes electronically processed, to disclose the pantheon presiding over daily activities and assumptions. Impressively crafted to deliver unsettling perceptions concerning home, the street, war and the family.

Yehuda Yannay Haddon
Melodrama review 511 CD

Yannay trained initially in Israel and now works in Milwaukee. Tidy wind-dominated chamber pieces start off and emphatic settings of poems by William Carlos Williams close, but the attention-grabbing heart of Haddon Haddon is 'In Silverwald' in The Silver Forest, a remarkable 30-minute piece which places assertive trombone voicings against an edgy, precarious drone, generated by electronics in combination with glass harmonica.

THE
WINNER
IS THE
LOSER



New compilation CD
probably contains tracks by:
ESP Family, Memes, Little
Princess, Nolar Camp,
Friendly Scientist, Shanty Psycho,
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in brief critical beats

Reviewed by Ian Penman

Beanelfield The Selenator (comp) CD 12

Wendell might find the prospect of this weekender release of lite-Ark poetry a bit boring. Peterson — a bit. Talker! Look at getting nothing. But on the Swag remix at least! Munch's Beanelfield swing like seraphim, while poetess-singer Bakka has a voice like sun on an autumn day, and a nice line in *Song Of Songs* carnality like something which you do good, but also takes weekly fare.

Thomas Brinkmann Groovin' Soul Center (Soul Center) NO NUMBER 1

Thomas Brinkmann *Ulla/Versa* EROST NO NUMBER 1. The Danish boy can do no wrong in my Powerbook, even if you do need a degree in crystallography to work out that TB has said self is hiding behind the confusion of signatures ("WB"? "WB"?). appended to these lascivious hanks of retro (1979-82) disco retelling. Under the glare of pseudonymity and art-bag handclaps over soul, doppelgänger Brinkmann goes on a band date of Miami Euro nostalgia with raw slick deniability joy. A real treat for those of an age to remember the dawn of the '12". Pitt owners should note that the sampled James Brown screams on "Soul Center" freaked my cats out bigtime — and they're used to the higher frequencies my little Whiskie hovers.

The Creators The Hard Margin (Ad Music) NO NUMBER 1

This offbeat indie band out of hood and transient from the Old Coast pool. The street, version of the title track is truly hot the cosmopolis. A dark mesh of malcontent production, Talk Kew's exhortations and Mos Def's sharp rhymes — "heater than summer in Kinsasha/West Francis Cappella and Dennis Hopper" ends in a Brooklyn-meets-Trenchtown dance Babal zone. They even rhyme "God's all" with "God's all" — hadn't anyone thought of doing that before?

Christopher De Babalon vs Kid-606 (As CBT) NO NUMBER 1

Trifly harder than the rest, this might be "Whisper of the Month" if we did things that way. I've accessed Babalon before on DNR and Mike Plutonsky, but Kid-606 — a 20 year old artist (in many senses) laid out at San Diego — is new to me, and big news. The 11 tracks here are an incredible slam across all current registers in Console

Nation. Two of Babalon's four are headbanging drum'n'bass, one an asexual swoon into darkcore Ambient, the other just other out there — a diastatic prism-blast. Kid-606's range is simply jaw-dropping: streets-ahead out of "trash" ("B08 Plan"), crack-rush pluriphonics ("Flutter"), edgily beautiful Ambient sci-fi ("Carving is One Thing"), 23 Steelo-sh ("For the pre-laws, I can see how this might knock your head clean off" — the way Hendrix's "Voodoo Child" once did for me something fallen out of the blue/black beyond and beckoning you on up, out. Ten out of ten for everything.

ELF/Attention Disorder Attention Disorder (Industrious) NO NUMBER 1

I expected this to be all Breckinridge. Terror slash — churn (I'm confusing them with some other Elf or Gabor/P), but it's swooningly beautiful in a literal sense: ELF is the live acts of Stuttgart's Mike Zimmermann in partnership with Berliner Karsten Droschel. Attention Disorder is his home-alone side: ELF more experimental AD more sensual, roughly speaking. The ELF side is a long drawl with clouds of vox slung low over a swamp bubble. The AD side is more literal but just as entrancing.

Jazz JOJOJO (No. 1) NO NUMBER 1

Same spunky retro as Brinkmann — party like it's 1982! — but with more of a jazz funk/urban fusion vein. The ferociously vibrant "Slender" recalls several of 12's and one early Weather Report. The title track builds slowly into a fireworks of diamond-palate beat. Incredible bass and live at the Village Gate percussion. Jazz — aka Tokyo DJ Mochi — laid remixed The Boredoms and is about to remix Robert Johnson? As electroclash goes, that could wake Freddie. Johnson screaming in the night. I'm just a Po! Ho, a long way from home?

Markus Kienitz Tilt (Klein) NO NUMBER 1

Debut solo outing from Markus Kienitz, bassist with Austrian beatniks Sofa Surfers and a quality improviser. Autonomized disk it is too. His beats have mental, at once angular and naggingly familiar. His treat for discerning aficionados recalls Barry Anderson — seemingly effortless strikingly raw — effortlessly uncategorized. The A-side is two shards of played down metal funk

crap, cutting, cauterized but things really perk on the fly's may-suit of urban unrest, progressive denigration from "Notes While Being Hacked" through the spacy "Washed" (the beats hold on hard to sanity as things start to unravel) to the spectral din of "Lumpen Park", where things roll away on a crystal wave of Get Out With It! Mischief. Smile: you're on closed circuit camera.

Kraftwerk Expo 2000 (Hemond) NO NUMBER 1

From the Heimat that gave us Goethe and Fasbinder, Kraftwerk's recent work may be forgiven if I never mind the quantity, level the force applied. It doesn't. "Expo" is strictly Tonight, Mathieu. We'll be Kraftwerk, leaving aside the big question of what they're doing amongst mere Eurotop sponsorship banquets of their loss in the self-parodic apogee of their sound — the sort of sound of which people say it couldn't be anyone else, at any time no one else would want it anyway. Ironically this is just "Trans Europe Express" with Beat-era design group rebranding.

Mank Jumbo & Boserik Pt. 1 (Gems) NO NUMBER 1

Shadow-house scratch and patch from Munich duo Mank and Imbrey. After the so-so '13.5, the other three tracks are sheer alchemical mind expansion. Jumbo like a loan brother. Lovely plucked-bass drawn beats, unpredictable (free jazz) samples, and duo-gone-crazy logic like a motherfigure "Itiner's Blues" is cool opera in a genuinely uncanny lack. "Stedmanone" is full of unforeseen humps 'n' bumps, away like falling down Duchamp's stairs. "Holland" (Dave presumably) is ECM meets the Black Ark up on the 23rd floor ledge.

Matthias Schaffhausen (Lardo) NO NUMBER 1

Hot! Once tracks 100% 01P. German Techno label Force Inc.'s decision to rebrand as House subsidiary, and then abandon its (baroque) discolorated output for a deeper sound was something of a disappointment. But this original take on Tech House by Ware label boss Matthias Schaffhausen, shows the new direction coming together nicely. Tracks like "Pilot" follow the conventions of the genre with style. Its Phuture-esque bass throbs and insectoid percussion clicks are given release by a warm synth/guitar. Also excellent is the title track with its stuttering high keys, quick beats and a personae humming bass oscillation. On a less conventional note, there's the Texano gloom of "Zet Runt" — disco on downers with Neo-noir vocals, and randomly plucked strings (Mike Shalloski).

Iven Schmidt The Sewell (Wine) NO NUMBER 1

"The Sewell" stands out on the four track sample of Martin Schmidt's Ware waves. Two tracks are formulaic blues, but my antennae shivered at the exquisite rolling thunder bass of both "The Sewell" and closer "No 56 2".

Spectre The End (Woods) NO NUMBER 1

One for all the groovy houses out there who think Wu-Tang are lightweight. With titles like "The Beginning Of The End," and "Kak Yuga (Age Of Destruction)," you know you're not in for plebeians and crotch shots with producer-assper Spectre — but there is dark humour here, like his phone message FX rap "I'm not home right now! I'm out running smok! plus one moment of stellar beauty on the female voxed "The Last Time," the Empire of Masses Attack on one of their aching Anima tapes. At double LP length it gets a bit "Sesame Street" spots out eschatology, but the very end and by-product (including delirious dark volts and Kluge/Fu film) with its attempted dub/Rasta detours, kept drawing me back in, even when I wasn't feeling shocked out. There's a weight here, and breadth. At the beginning of the 21st century, The End might just prove to be one animal masterpiece.

Yoshinori Sunahara Clippers Disobedience (Rough) NO NUMBER 1

More late '70s sound? Higher pastiche, this time more Blackbirds 4-10-taken-out-the-Chic, c'est sa. "Disobedience" is Yosh's own light fingered remix of his "Hayasaze" (a very late 70s title, near). We also get two "Lovebirds" remixed from Ego Express and Nicole Conte — the latter a melting salicy can I take you back to my Sorf London bachelor pad? Samba. Not to get nostalgic or yet, but I can almost taste the lequils, lime and baby love.

Twig A Day In The Life Of A Production Operative (Rough) NO NUMBER 1

Dropped at 33, this sounds like a dream dail dragged between Throbbing Gristle and a Jungist psychiatric station. At its proper 45, "Ragged Jig" and "PSH" turn out to be a bit eerie, although "Cruggigig" pines the way for "Factory Work". Based on Steven Twigg Owen's time in a Lancashire Davies factory, it's a disturbing hyper-skilled of distortion, alarm bells, musical RSI. The nightmare journey of the wage slave — the masochist, night-in-white-out pleasure Lyndon identified as the missing component in Marx's critique — finds purchase here in jagged oscillation between unbearable real-time squeals and a relentless toll of timeclock beats. L.J.

in brief dub

Reviewed by Steve Barker

Cornell Campbell I Shall Not Remove 1975-1980 two x five amrco cd

Ex-Unique member Cornell Campbell was sandwiched between Johnny Clarke and Delroy Wilson as a favoured vocalist of producer Bunny Lee. This album brings together many of the singer's finest sides for Lee and all but one of the 11 cuts are extended versions with dubmaster King Tubby in particularly ferocious mood. The set opens with three tributes to Lee in his alternative guise as the Gorgon. Particularly noteworthy is the seven-minute "Dance In A Greenish Room" with bowling from Dr. Alimuddin entitled "Chance Above". Great artwork and '70s fashion tips from Cornell are a bonus.

Creation Rebel Starship Africa on u sound union cd

Dub Syndicate *One Way System* on u sound union cd
Two store killers from On-U's back catalogue, resolutely smoothed and officially for the first time on CD. Creation Rebel's Starship Africa was the first and only album issued back in 1980 by On-U's precursor, the short-lived 40 Rhythms. Constructed from a bunch of rhythms cut for '70s sensation DJ Spenser, the final mixdown was achieved, but when the tape was flipped over and played backwards for the effects to be fed in — all done in a day of course. The album still awakes recognition as the only possible soundtrack for William Gibson's as yet unfinished *Neuromancer*.

One Way System was 1983's follow-up to Dub Syndicate's debut, *The Pounding System*. Very much a pre-modern album in that, rather than being created from scratch, its tracks actually constituted a dub version of Singers & Players. *Stopping Heights* (also scheduled for release later this year). Contemporary reggae purists did not take kindly to this kind of experimental fiddling — especially from a white English boy — and it was still two or three years before the debut bunnies of *Sleng Teng* would change the way we heard everything labelled reggae. Now we can give albums like this the time and space they deserve.

Dubwise Productions *Rooft Connections* own cd
This album serves as a living emblem of the vision and sense of purpose which prevails in the UK's new roots movement. The eight vocal tracks are written by Chris

Dubwise. Jay in partnership with roots legend Junior Murvin from JA, UK stalwart Winston Fearns and London newcomer Dunny Vibes. All are dubbed up by a quartet that represents the toughest mindset around — Dougie Wardrop, Russ Bell-Brown, Guzpe P and Lee Dagaib. With the reggae zine *Stop Forward* thrown in, this package provides a good entry point into a subculture that can seem impenetrable without proper initiation.

G Corp *Dub Plates From The Elapheant House* own cd
An album of dub-influenced House might be the last thing we need, but G Corp (whose pedigree includes Electric 101 and The Groove Corporation) does straight in the duet and come out with a set that demonstrates the right balance between reverence and concern for profit: go straight to the wily title "Worst Dressed Chicken" which while using all the trademarks of reggaebud production is such a fresh and uplifting sound you wonder why these guys never made a fortune in the mainstream.

Jackie Mitton The Keyboard King At Studio One own cd

The commercial success and excellent preservation of their Percentage series convinced Clement "Cosmo" Dodd that cooperation with the Soul Jazz/Universal Sound circuit might not be such a bad idea. The 15 track compilation is mainly selected from the late Jackie Mitton's early Studio One albums, with the exception of a couple of tracks from the overlooked *Showcase* set recorded in the early '80s. Although Mitton is central to the development of all the modern Jamaican genres, this immaculate set could stand the test against the likes of The MCs or The Pioneers. What lives specifically about these tunes, and many others from the same source and of the same vintage, is their deceptive MOR-shness which evaporates totally when you ramp up the bass. We are primed a further selection of Jackie's best from the label, next time from producers such as Bunny Lee and Sugar Minott.

Lee Perry Truancy & Wisdom 1971-1978 on truancy moon cd
Lee "Scratch" Perry *Techno Party* own cd
Lee "Scratch" Perry *On The Wire* 1970-1978 on cd
Of the three sets listed above only the first can be recommended — and even that not to

a first-time buyer. An Australian compilation, sourced via a dubcut licensing deal via Perry's ex-wife Pauline Morrison and their son Omar, all the tunes are dubbed from disc, which without exception are rare, classic or both. Certainly the average Pennyphone will snap this up, but with cuts from Augustus Pablo, I Roy, The Heptones, Dennis Alcapone and Leonard The Ethiopian. Unlike this collection from the producer's golden period will have a wider appeal. By contrast, the early label Techno Party is no party, being largely an exercise in creating rhythm beds for Scratch to be down in it all the tunes were up to the standard of the closing track, "mutant drum", is balls, meets hairy loveler, rock under members by Mad Professor — then it would be the best Upsetter album since *Time Bomb* X De Devil Dead. On The Wire apparently dates from ten years ago, two tracks, including the M&E and "The Grim Reaper", are certainly of On-U Sound provenance, but without the necessary credits on the sleeve. The Upsetter strikes again!

Ernest Ranglin *Sounds and Power* studio one 5000152 lp
This set appeared a couple of years ago riding on the back of Ranglin's new-found and well-deserved fame in the wider World Music market. Now available as a vinyl LP, the reggae composer's first-choice format despite the notorious deficiencies of the Jamaican vinyl recycling industry — this is a must. To hear the trademark picking style of Jamaica's foremost jazz guitarist on top of those timeless rhythms from Studio One is a real treat. There's also a good dose of sub-bunk waltz-waltz on top of the bass to avoid any accusations of smoothness. Whether he actually got paid for his composition credits on several tunes is another matter.

The Rootsman/Daddy Freddy *Imitation* twice the music tempest 12
Daddy Freddy/He-Man *Dj Super Clash* twice the music tempest 12
Bradford's Rootsman is building up a solid following across Europe, but these tough 12"s see him dropping the Middle Eastern rhythms and vocal stylings that have marked his recent work, and returning to his home ground. "Imitation" was removed from 99's *Roots Of The Upsetter* release on BSI. Italian Hip-hop kid Zaccari's sultry riffs contrasts with the slow-mo mox from US dubbers' *Synthesizer*. He-Man, distinct from the King Dragon stable in Kingston, serves up the abstract "X-Men" the choice cut across the two prices. The Rootsman is one of the few non-school dub producers capable and confident of moving between basement items such as these and the roots tunes which have his name.

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Unexplained Transmissions is the solo project of David R. Newman. This is the debut album which collects together the two previously released mini-vinyl albums originally released on the First Expression label in the States.

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in brief electronica

Reviewed by Rob Young

Autopoiesis: Love A Noir FRONTIER

Autopoiesis: La Vie A Noir
Transposed EP FRONTIER 9777
2012

Double-Deutch stereotypes don't help this complex but keenly impressive *avantgarde* Prose posse waffle about heat transfers or "crucibles in mykados" merely dull the aural shock of these spectacular electronic transformations. Unlike the mazy Fernö Bengtson, the Frankfurt duo avoid subdued, ashen hues to dominate, with an ever-present lulling buzz-spring undertone. Whatever the original sample sources, most of the textures float free of context, so when the occasional bass solo or box-stacking cluster emerges, it's a wild sign an arm waving amongst carquake detours. The Transposed EP contains further reworkings of their '99 studio CD by Tene Thaelmick. Kit Clayton, Vladimir Delay and Gaz Valley plus 28 luscious grooves

Boulderdash: No Nerver 'Went To Kowloon Island ARTIST ROOMS

Boulderdash: No Nerver 'Went To Kowloon Island
UNDER CONSTRUCTION ARTISTS CD
2012

Two Swedish acts feed their naive syntactic syllable-syllabus into electronica's linguistic mine. Boulderdash's Daniel Skutomon and Hans Möller suffer a little from Scandinavian coyness: "Electronic style music," says the small print on their sleeve, and so it goes. These are shufflers for mood, around a Brink Lane clothes emporium.

Prod are trying too hard to stretch raw samples and sounds into songlike structures (albeit without words) rather than let the electricity follow its own tangled, rooty logic. Very wince-chorus, wince-chorus... you can soon articulate exactly when the charges are gonna come in their electro-dishes.

Brüsseler Platz 104-Musik/Han/Ch/Geert Lovink

1040 Fother CD 10149 CD
Various past and present members of Cologne's A+Music collective supply a noisy background mix for this spoken word collection of theory-fragments by Adorno (Foundation of the Advancement of Illegal Knowledge/Amsterdam). Suppose have previously used "sought" recordings of EM Cioran and philosopher Willem Flusser, so it's good to see them taking a more creative hand in presenting this offbeat network, which basically argues that theory is never enough. Accordingly Georg Dijk, Jan St

Werner and Marcus Schmeller get storied with the CDs' tumble and consumer electronics, and the whole thing is woven together by Hasech, a lost figure from the scene who seemed to have disappeared forever.

Datatch'i (Rec+Play) CARIBBEA

Datatch'i (Rec+Play)
HOLBORN RECORDS 10000-CD
Datatchi is New Yorker Joseph A. Fraok, credited here with everything from the music and production to the infantile paring on the sleeve... none too impressive, this distant tip-off of Aphae Twn's childlike scrawl. Much of this rasping drum 'n' bass is summed up by the last track title: "Dizzy Fizz" but calling another song "Turk Hawk" is the real giveaway. There are reports from a tight sprinter, too much gentleman-sneak-me and not enough asinine. Zan Lyons, from London is aiming at a similar sprit-seewed consistency, but adds dignified incantatory strings and Willem Old style synth-chorus. What next... Engine goes Gubb?

Exos: Elevenfold NOISE

Exos: Elevenfold
ARMOR SPINSON'S TWO EXOS EPs for the moment. True label were quiet incandescent of frictionless morphology. His full-length debut looks on to an unexpectedly musical pulse at first, but soon begins drawing out the highly strung elasticity of the BOB rhythm box. Although there's little here you haven't already heard on CDs by Porter Hicks. Various Artists, etc, the imitator remains consistently fluttering rather than pale, with just the right admixture of sadness and optimistic forward motion.

Ihan 10149 CD

Ihan 10149 CD
In which the surface of art itself seems to become damaged. Ihan and Mayo... two design students from Toulouse, we're told... come across like a tougher version of Sheffield duo and. With the toughness comes a certain asceticism that might knock much of this inventive music into the same blank, faceless cell-maze that consigned much of the 20th-century avant-garde to oblivion. Every track is "Sans Titre" some of them are a little heavy on the executive type factor ("a7" and "a5") sound like glorified metallic clocks counting off several time zones simultaneously, all of which causes late to err too far on the side of "sound design" rather than building a machine for living in.

Kid-606: Kid-606 And Friends

Kid-606: Kid-606 And Friends
Vol. 1 RECORDS 1000001-CD
An awesome sleeper party this turned out to be. For this 18 track remix tape, the San Diego Kid's has raked his friends from all across the altered States of America (if the Kid's originals sound kawaii and forward, his friends are given leave to re-kidder his Radio Shack circuit boards from their own bags of spares. Synthesizer boots up a renegade voice synthesis program to sing a Kid-606 story over some lucky random clattering breakfasts. Track 10: Kitchin's Aaron Bergman and Linauskas turner down with some electro-psychedelic. Platonos continue to reign supreme with a groovy imaginary bass movie theme. Meanwhile locked in the basement, Christoph De Babelon, Twisted Science and SHAW spin-off Vornit Lince are running an after light club, beating the tracks senseless with digital catpaws. Infinitely more than the average backslapping remix album, this is a collective imagination turning hot. Brilliant stuff.

Kühn (Köln) K. B. K. O. L. D. CD

Kühn (Köln)
Belgium's Kohn is the unlikely sounding Jürgen De Blonck is not afraid to use the unkind liberally, which raises his game. Although by the time you get to titles like "The Wrath Of Kohn", enough is enough. There's something here for everyone... Some "You'll lead his kiss LP so much they invited him on tour. Kohn has VIV's knack for bringing out the most surprising aspects of found sounds, the brass band on "Willen in Kohnen" stuttering Hix/Dix glitches. Rya beds-like sinus-scouring tones, and Steve Roden style semiotics of acoustic objects (vocal and acoustic guitar). While these tracks are explicitly offered up as a personal take on the music, not as byproducts of a global scene, the most affecting is the closing utopian song, where the mysterious Mr Kohn describes himself blinking into the sunlight after a long nocturnal session at the computer.

Matik MATIK SUB 005A SA 62 CD

Matik
Sub Rosa have a knack of unearthing hidden unheard Japanese electronics. Bok's teasing, just-sampling vignettes are one of the catalogue's high points. Matik (Hansaku Yanagida) is their latest find. It seems strange among this batch of glitches, tones and drones to hear something so rooted in High/Rhythm and piano riffs, and while a lot of these seven tracks have a slightly dated feel now, they're certainly more frisky than some of the cold cuts on offer elsewhere in this month's pile.

Jake Mandell: Quondam

Quondam
CURRENT 10149 CD 10149 CD
Low volume Techno with polished industrial ambiances from this US producer. "Emulsified Oscillate" kicks off with a spring-loaded drum track, but its spectral

signs hint of the music's greater subtleties, the soft patterning drums and quiet bass notes of "Enchanted Palace" the hall-melodies and stuttering hi-hat trills of "Jacet". The style reaches its apotheosis on "Tectonic Shifting", whose percussive rumble and synth bleeds float its rhythms in stereo space, but equally engaging is the more conventional "Anknoted Bone" whose solitary booming addum and dislocate string line sound like dance music for deserted nightclubs. There are nods to masters Basic Channel on "Red Vaguetude", a mid-tempo kick-drum stamp and Plaxation on the solitary, mephisto-percussion of "Knotted Trail". But overall Mandell's set is confident in its own chaos (Mike Shalinski)

Paco: State Of Mind 10149 CD

Paco: State Of Mind
There's no beating about the bush with Berlin DJ producer Paco, and his third LP similarly allows for plenty of repetition and little deviation from the purring motor of his sleepy House rhythms. There's no finer example of these pushing Eurobeat on chrome disc than this wailing, swelling regime. Far from the increasingly jaded-out grooves of Cologne tracks like "Fuel" scour the ears and lullulate the pots. Drum machines bleed with the aura of dissonance, stoned acid rhythm meshes trigger like AK47 bursts.

Pulse Programming: Problem

Pulse Programming: Problem
ATHEMATIC 10149 CD
The almost blank sleeve keeps details on this project close to its chest, but that's probably the closest that Chicago's aesthetics imprint will get to the labyrinthine green worlds of first-generation Ambient. Carrying that vaguely heavy analogue feel from the likes of Enos Apollo (and reminding you that the only music astronauts were permitted to take with them on the first moon landing was Country and Western). These pulse programmers achieve a swoony drift. Lubradford would kill for

Miki Yui: Small Sounds 10149 CD

Miki Yui: Small Sounds
Ambient as... not perfume, but radioactive fallout. This capsule of inhabitable atmospheres comes shouldered up in a plastic capsule... well, boys will be Boys. Made in Cologne, Yui's cobwebbed noise collages are intended to dust the air: talk those important little mental spaces. Listen to it at the requested, transparent level, and the various swirling notes and flecks of noise hang so lightly in the air, you almost breathe them in rather than hear them. Turn up the volume and the weird digital compressed effect is similar to listening to plane conversations when your ears are popping. Of the numerous current microsonic CDs out there, this one's a keeper.

in brief global

Reviewed by Clive Bell

Les Aïssaoua De Fes Trance

Ritual Institut Du Monde Arabe 120111 CD
The Aïssaoua brotherhood of Fes are a Moroccan mystical order which, unlike most of Islam, emphasises the spiritual role of music. A rare piece of truly old music, these tapes clearly recorded percussion with chanting led by the beautiful voice of Hadj Sad Brada to work through a ritual which progresses gradually to the ecstatic trance dancing at its culmination.

Bale Seni Megasari Javia

Kapala Suling NIA ASOUND 1560225 CD
From West Java, Bale Seni Megasari's Seling includes bamboo flute and kicchap (other, plus one or two gamelan instruments). Everything is harmonious and gentle in Sundanese style, a world away from the armpit-jarring of Balinese gamelan. As usual with Playasound, there's virtually no information on the sleeve, but we can see that the kicchap looks remarkably like a crocodile.

Xu Chaoming Sheng CHD PLAYS

19017902 CD

Wu Wei Organ For The Mouth

WU WEI MUSIC 10010402 CD

The sheng is technically the most sophisticated of the family of Far Eastern mouth organs, and Chinese soloists have developed a rich and subtle concert repertoire for the instrument. Its bright sound gleams like a polished brass pipe and the rhythms tend to skip by swiftly and unexpectedly. Xu Chaoming is a virtuoso from Shanghai who plays with great delicacy and a wide range of techniques, including quivering tremolo chords and a bristling flutter-tongue. There's even a lull here and a piece in praise of a researcher which engages thousands of hectares of land. A highly accomplished and fascinating album. Wu Wei is a young pupil of Xu Chaoming resident in Berlin. His solo record involves a couple of other Chinese musicians on zither and percussion in a display of highly skilful playing, with more bravura and ebullient spirit than his teacher's very subtle performances.

La Daqqa Sacred Drums From Marrakech

INSTITUT DU MONDE ARABE 121024 CD

This is a condensed recording of a drumming ritual that takes place once a year from midnight till dawn, providing a glimpse into the old ways of Marrakech. Seated in a large circle, the chanting and drumming begins extremely slowly and

builds relentlessly to the trance-like climax. The excellent sleeve notes by Hassan Jouad describe how any important younger drummer, who accelerates during the opening of the ceremony, is punished for his lack of self control by having his drum swept to the ground and broken.

Oejami Salih De Constantinople

SARIR 00200 CD

Oejami is the alias of Necmi Cakil, who grew up in southern Turkey but now promotes the Hubble Bubble club in North London. This excellent second album is dedicated to the late Bryn Jones, aka Pindragga. Salih is a big, bouncing, fast-moving bag of a record, put together with an excited, almost childlike enthusiasm which overflows out of every track. Oejami can't say no to a melody. When he splashes his Turkish instruments across his belly-dancing breakbeats and his electric bubblebaths, it's always with a strong sense of tunelessness.

Recycler AlphaBhangra

Psychedelic Funkin' MAFON 940911 CD

A dense and upbeat set of well-styled, mad Arab bhangra with splashes of ethnic looping. It's brought to the table by two Frenchmen, formerly of Industrial outfit Met Lines of Acid bass, fused heretofore with Arab percussion and African chants. Recycler don't go in for teasing build-ups and almost every track takes the shortcut to arm-fucking ecstasy. Like a delicious French-cream sweetie and full on.

Saif Saleh Saleh & Abdullah

Musica Ahmed Tawab 1 The Music Of Zarzabab 04010111 CD

This charming and intimate album is the fourth in a series recorded in 1988 by Gibeltyly on location in Zarzabab. The singer's ambience can be heard in the background of duets for zither and lute with occasional drum and violin. Abdullah Musaa Ahmed's guitar often is the real star, switching from Arabic to Western scales with a cool aplomb. The comprehensive and amusing sleeve notes reveal that Zarzabab's most famous kalam singer was Freddie Mercury.

Various Artists Cape Verde

An Anthology Of Music 000001 CD

The singer Cesaria Evora sold more than half a million copies of her fourth album, *Musik Reclamado*, putting the Cape Verde sounds firmly on the map. Now here is a

collection of newly recorded roots music from the Atlantic islands, off the coast of Senegal. Fast, festive percussion alternates with gloriously battered accordions and violins, and always the melancholy gleam of the little Portuguese guitars. Of the many wonderful tracks, José Domingos Lapeze's contribution stands out: he emigrated to America but his accent and singing style are redolent of a vanished age.

Various Artists Ethiopian Urban And Tribal Music Vol 1

Mindemoo Musica 00000112 CD

Ragnar Johnson made these extraordinary field recordings in 1971 (this was also responsible for the New Guinea recordings on David Toop's *Quartz Label*). Originally released by Lynchind in the 70s, Johnson has written, in the LP's 'house organ' foreword, stretched tales of the misuse of his material by various starry showbiz figures. Whether dancing to an accordion in a ball hall of conjoined corn, strumming harps and thumb-pianos, or playing chanting, these musicians are never less than rhythmically compelling. The sinister *Atar* flute duet sounds like an attack of the killer bees, and the deep buzzing of the 'Harp Of David' has to be heard to be believed.

Various Artists Sawzall: Music Of Sarawak

MAFON 20611 CD

These pioneering new recordings were made by Randy Raine-Reusch, an ethnomusicologist and musician who has performed with Pauline Oliveros. Sparsely populated, Sarawak lies on the north east coast of Borneo and is part of Malaysia. Many subcultures and beautiful instruments are represented here, including bamboo ocarina, bamboo mouth organ (brass gongs), snail shells for calling to frogs, and a nose flute for conversing with the dead. At the other end of the spectrum is a refined Chinese opera ensemble. A fascinating window on a relatively unexplored region.

Caetano Veloso Omaggio A Federico E Gialletta

UNIVERSAL/MARCH 556182 CD

Recorded live in San Marino, Italy, this is Brazilian star Veloso's ultra-mellow love letter to the late Italian film director Federico Fellini and Guiseppe Masina Veloso's velvet soul chords are crowned by a quartet of strings and drums. The connection with Fellini seems obvious: there's a sprinkling of *La Strada*, but most of the 19 tracks are Brazilian songs. 'Living Berlin', 'Let's Face The Music And Dance' is reduced to an unpleasant marshmallow soup. I'm afraid I remain immune to Veloso's charms and this dull album sounds like a wire war background tape to these cloth ears.



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in brief hiphop

Reviewed by Dave Tompkins

Bumpy Knuckles Bumpy Knuckles Baby! (Stomp In The Game) • JAY-Z/KR999 12

Through Q-Tip once rhymed off his "knuckles got nasty," New York's Bumpy Knuckles (once Freddie Foxxx) is the robber. The Premier-produced "Part Of My Life" was one of last year's more convincing singles, proving Bumpy doesn't sacrifice flow for gruffness and fatwatches. Produced by Achemet, "Stomp In The Game" is all wounded stunts and brass flourishes. "Knuckles B Knuckles baby you on a liquid bed. We got your teeth on our skin, em on a string like bones and your pants are home alone." Best Rock provides. Bumpy Knuckles Baby! with a tating penis, over which Bumpy raps. "I know the only thing I could tell you was crime." Sometimes, there's a lot in a name.

Common Like Water For Chocolate • MCA/15821 CD • UP

A hiphop album that opens with 14 minutes of live Afrobeat! In which Ray Hargrove's trumpet evokes the sax. Tony Allen gets looped and Common makes sure he's not the phone is connected. Welcome to the Chicago MC's fourth and best album inspired by Laura Esquivel's novel of the same name and produced by the Roots. Alvin Thompson on "Ghetto Heaven" (D'Angelo honors the Family Sound's patchy live rooftop all-day piano sessions like Nipsey's "The World Is Your's" and Common recognizes, "It's there in a hot man in disguise"). On "Cold Blooded" is necktie break Hargrove huffs through a guitar guitar amp. Common cuts lines with interjections on "Funky For You" disco laser shoot-out. "He got off because I pushed him" he admits on "Doornit," both singing and saving MC's "The Question" wanders like A Tribe Called Quest's "What" as Common contrasts his own dream and Mos Def gets Jack Hardy with the homies. "Why do I need ID to get ID?" Elsewhere DJ Premier emotes ("I'm Sane") the real 89 MC Lyle stands up ("A Film Called") Firm Kut drops by and were all water for it.

Dilated Peoples The Platform/Amplification • Jive 11111 12

Down that lagging bassline for real, breathing for more than 18 seconds after an edifying haphazard track. Dilated producerMC Evidence gains capacity crowds with lines like, "I know my real's real got noxious at shows." Across stage innocence is "The cure to get on microphones and leave em debuffed." Produced by Achemet, "Amplification" uses clavinet 45

funk with blinks of strings and guitar. DJ Babu, meanwhile, continues to run stringent quality assurance tests on the wax.

Kid Koala Carpal Tunnel Syndrome • New York 2004 CD

The Jungle Brothers aged gonzo grunts on 1988's "Sounds Of The Satori" and Kid Koala chides clown funk in 2000. On 96's *Sounds Of The Satori* tape, he made a beat from Charlie Brown's riffs, but *Carpal Tunnel Syndrome* is daily Thursday life, scribbled drums, and the sounds of "a bag of gits falling off a car." The singing walk of "Sina Weir" could be a conscious scuffle scratch the same way Mandrill's guitar emulated a mandril. Likewise, the Muppety character spatters on "I Hate For Missing People" preface beeping on "Meridell," the words "we are" are fused into electro bits that could back the "Fly Rhythmic Funk" classic "Rabbitshuff" around like Frog and Toad scurrying through a mushroom patch at the pace of Big Moke's "They're Coming To Take The Away (Big House)." The snazzy live prog rock change to the step-back and "Sun-dust" cast of "Night At Nubara." Breaks link themselves in unusual positions and dialogue is geymandered for Koala's absurdities. "But, of course, is what he deserved for pretending to be a musician when he was only a butcher."

D'Angelo Voodoo • WEA 1243849498 CD • UP

D'Angelo's "Unstoppable" (seven minutes) sounds like Prince's "Do The Baby" and "Slow Love" got together and made the beast with two backs. But don't flash your girl-red lemmings just yet. Continued beneath the skin and stropped to the coccyx. Voodoo is what Lil' Grady Lewis would call "soul smokin'" where one-man harmonies fulfill stark rimbombs. On "The Roof" the Marvin Gaye dream means "From the pit of the bottom that knows no rose" as Charlie Hunter's guitar turns inside out. "Devil's Pie" breaks down the properties of zombie power to DJ Premier's tickle-down beats. "Demons screaming in my ass/and I'm angry/ all my friends/roller let them hear this spinning sphere." "Feel Like Makin' Love" is a Roberto Pack incoherence with a dirty mind. Roberto "Africa's" blue-spired cadence will leave Maxwell fans bored, slumped on their tired R&B sagging.

J Live The Best Part • London/PRMO CD • UP

Read between the rhythms. J Live is the verbal presiding god. On the title track produced by DJ Premier, the Harlem

English teacher quotes a student who, it turns out, parrots him in the album's classroom intro. On "Wax Paper" (produced by Prince Paul, Live continues to rock doubles, pensively scratching the head of both truth and lyric proofreader. Here formidable argot takes a crime snap. "Every move they made was quoted by the union Lord" Paul's thinking kingdom morphs into "Tenebrae," where a very similar twinkle (from producer Chris Catalyst) is paired by reflective horn swells and where J Live's "vibes are bared too deep to be measured by the songs of the hour glass/other words, 'back to last.'" The Pete Rock produced "Look It To The Beat" gives some hope to the oft abused get-in-track metaphor. Live's added funky fennecism on "Don't Ray" and observes the senseless on "Rage." "The mind man's story son will be the dumb father of a blind cat."

Tajiri Mahal The Present

Awakening/Hunger For The Woodcock • Interscope/Interscope 12 • UP
On "Hunger For The Woodcock" Tajiri Mahal asks, is it wrong for me to want to read the right poems of a starving night dropped in Carolina? Baylin? "Dwelling in Raleigh North Carolina, Tajiri Mahal. I was a suffering obsession with the night" infusing gravel-ot noids over a bass snarl that is paced with a panned, well-in-ot effect. Sharpening his fingers under Super DJ Clark Kent's tubelike producer Se'Round Sound has previously contributed a remix to the Scott La Rock tribute, *Man And His Music*. On the hook Mahal mixes past with a Bobby Womack chant: "I want to see a 'bair new' sound" into his own synopsism as Mahal confirms, "Hunger is what you make it."

2Pac & The Outlaws Still I Rise • Interscope/Interscope 12 • UP

Our late lamented icon is unexpectedly Conscious Like Curtis on the righteous "Letter 2 The President." "Baby Don't Cry" (a tender penance for meagres past) and the self-explanatory "Teardrops & Closed Caskets"—an L.A. era queen to Mayfield's own "Baby Zed." Highlight the ferociously uplight "Hell 4 Hustler," where gospel wail and clinical paranoia eye each other easily across an eternal waiting room. In places Shaker sounds still in two playing the part of wise father figure for himself—apparently sick unto death of the colour-coded cliché he has to keep speaking just to survive. Unbelievable irony that the same mad survivor ethos killed one more prematurely old young black man this one with the paranoiac rattle of the true Oracle about him. (on Pennoni)

Various Artists Droppers' Science: The Best of Cold Chillin'

Interscope/Interscope 12 • UP
Gehring Cold Chillin's impact in the mid-to late 80s. Big Daddy Kane's "Raw" featured

Bobby Byrd warning "I'm comin'" and a new kettle blessing your ear and burning an ill-advised racing shape in your high-top! Last two little lost Master Packer's screaming snarl appears courtesy of compier Marley Marl. Featuring Marley's Juice Crew All-Stars: "The Symphony" created the specs for all future posse MC passages. Elsewhere on "It's A Derrro," Kool G Rap sings his kid. Craig G's classic "Dropper" Science" prefigures Baggies "One More Chance" remix and MC Shan's "The Bridge" headbuts the Bronx. On "The B. The B." Master Ace trades rhythms with himself instead Big Marley, while on "Just Rhymer" With Bz. Marley himself trades rhythms with Big Daddy Kane. Kool G Rap and Kame's lines of fury on the unreleased duets-only version of "Raw" is more paying for this in full. And that's a capital F on the full and the fury because you'll scurry around knowing. "Why I can't make the like that no more."

Various Artists Wordlab Vol 1 • Wordlab/Wordlab 12 • UP

A compilation of UK Hiphop that shows the scene to be as healthy as it's ever been. The major players on the scene are all represented. Mark B, Sizz, Rude, Manuwa, Lewis Parker. But it's the most unknown quantities that promise the most. Blamz's "Blamz" Chops in a minor key piano motif with all the emotional precision of the RZA. Aspects' "West Country" swing suggests an individuality miles from that cool-US delivery that blights too much homegrown music. Lyle's tribute to Stephen Lawrence. In "Memory," overly acknowledges the scene's debt to the reggae sound systems that many seem determined to dismiss. The key to this album's success lies in the artists' belief in their own reference-free identity. The opening track by Mark B and Blade speaks of the stigma attached to UK Hiphop that holds the genre back. The rest of the album simply ignores that stigma and delivers the goods. (Peter McIntyre)

Zion I Critical/Versus • Caroline/Caroline 12

The Bay Area's Zion I sounds like an empowerment of Group Home's Melia's "I walk the rugged avenue with my B Bay rap." Very Bay guest Planet Asia intends to be in several places simultaneously. "My plan is to state beyond every line I stated." On the original version of "Critical" rearranged keyboard notes stave over an expansive sax. As with Los Angeles' People Under The Stars, Zion I's production snobs stand templates. Lookback's "Madd" does a three-in-one move: shifting narrative by applying a different melodic storypoint to each verse and linking them with cradling soundbites. Also included is a lushly phased piano piece is followed by baritone doorbell beat.

in brief jazzReviewed by **David Keenan**

Sam Bardfeld's Cabal Fatale

Taxelometry CINE 195 CD
Volcani Sam Bardfield's CV is certainly an eclectic one ranging from sessions with harpist Bill Barron through time spent with John Cohen and Bruce Springsteen. Here he works with bassist Drew Gress and drummer Mike Sain, both of whom served time in trumpeter Dave Douglas's swing group. So it's not altogether surprising that *Taxelometry* has the same delicately prowling grace that characterized Douglas's series of pocket-Balkan pieces. Bardfield's compositions are as scattered over the map as his CV would suggest, taking in vaguely ragtime swaggers, small chamber movements and drunken ball-

Abdelhai Bennani Ouardet

Enfance (page 21) Co Bernini is an interesting terrorist who brings a variety of off-the-wall approaches to straightforward blowing. Often piling or juggling into his lies, he summons up swarms of chattering voices which sometimes sound like a roomful of senile men muttering to themselves. That said, the *Enfance* sessions are fairly low key affairs, but the presence of the great Alan Silva on bass does occasionally raise the endeavour to a level of austere drama. *Tanzoku* moves between trumpet (Ruggeri) and flutist (Indian flutes, providing some nice colour, but the group never coheres around any particular idea long enough for it to take hold

Peter Brötzmann-Sabu
Toyozumi Doo *Love In Japan*

1982 reissued complete CD set CD
Originally released in Japan in a ludicrously
limited edition, this killer session is
paradoxically reissued in another numbered
small run (Drummer Yoshisaburo 'Sabo'
Toyozumi's name might ring some bells as

part of Charles Mingus's fairly uninspired Japanese pickup band from the early '70s, but the evangelical fury of his playing here is enough to clear the air of any bad smells. Brotmann really pulls out the stops, throwing in everything from bouncing big band refrains, chillingly shrill moans and some of his most ossified Avatars to date.

Peter Kowald with Barre Phillips, Barry Guy and Maarten Altena *Bass Duets* (mp3)

European impresario Peter Kowald is a rarity, a bassist capable of holding your interest even when playing alone. However, his three volumes of duets with the likes of Derek Bailey, Peter Brotzmann, Dismund Deek and Andrew Cyrille attest to his love of trust to lead a constellation. This time out, it's bass on bass and through. Perhaps because Barre Pharois started the low and then rolling with the first ever solo bass album, *Uncomposed* (Barre) (1968), his duo tracks are the most rewarding, chugging through Kowald's bass ruminations with beauty and power. Barry Guy brings out some more aggressive, percussive clank, whereas the tracks with Florian Alena are filled with an understated air of drama. Concert track lengths ensure that none of the players exceeds their welcome.

Iris Lord And The Divine Monochord A Rose In A

Carbage Can LORD KITTY PRODUCTIONS
NO NUMBER CD
Playwright, pianist and singer Iris Lord made her debut at New York's Town Hall with her jazz opera *Death, Life And Potence*, directed by Ornette Coleman. Since then she's worked with such luminaries as Cecil Taylor and James Blood Ulmer. Her voice is

spectacular, with all the mesmeric appeal of Pat Metheny circa *Horses*. The trouble is her inane lyrics and her backing group's groovy mugging is real tough going. Tracks like "Soul To Soul" are truly embarrassing, with Lord gibbly asserting, "Is there a soul? Yes, there's a soul! There's got to be! Don't you see?"

Joe Morris Racket Club about 1942
ATN 10 CD

[illegible]

Nimiprign Second CD review
www.fda.gov/cdrh/cd

Nimpeno are a duo featuring trumpeter Greg Kelley and soprano saxophonist (Ibho) Rainey. The pair evidently enjoy the company of Jason Lescabeur's tape loops and percussionist Tetsuya Nakatani. The epic, slow spaces opened up by Kelley's trumpet recall the orchestral conceptions of Bal Dacal, minus his frosty immings. Rainey raises slight, almost electronic sounding overtones from his soprano, which rise and fall with the mesmeric gravity of Nurse With Wound's tone symphonies. When both players inch toward each other from out of

the thick silence the effect is invigoratingly out. Second CD stands out as an epic of widescreen American beauty.

Ken Vandermark's Sound In Action Trio *Design In Time*

DEK DRUG DEV
DVX TIVO *Love in Weeds & Chicago* 1988 OMARSA001 2010 2020
Chicago saxophone fan Van dermark has been one of the key catalysts in getting *New Jazz* across to a generation of kids weaned on hardcore and avant-garde. At this stage in his career, he's almost exclusively playing live, but those few new CDs are indispensable. The Second In Action trio teams Van dermark with two drummers he regularly sideman Tim Huelstena and Robert Sully, a drummer with a great pedigree who remains a shadowy presence on the jazz music scene. Barry actually played on the first ever recordings by Sun Ray's Aklestra and hooked up with them on and off throughout the '70s. His playing alongside Huelstena on *Devos* in time is so powerful and precise that the pair sound like one drummer with eight limbs, as they play some of their most riveting tracks as "Angels" and Omarsa's "Honey." *"Peace"*: Van dermark's DMC duo with Hyland Drake and Ken Keseler play with passion free-thoughtful Lee in Wally's Chicago.

Christian Wolfarth & Donat Fisch, Circle & Line Unit USBA 18.02

Back of the bunch this month comes courtesy of the Swiss duo of saxophonist Donat Fisch and drummer Christian Wollsch. *Circle & Line* is a fantastic collection of miniatures: loose impressions, sad-eyed ballads, and joyous rambles. Fisch's bouncing horn torrents boast the same logic as Sonny Rollins, combining earthy street knowledge with complex esoteric patterns. Drummer Wollsch reaches his blow for blow with loose-limbed bow patterns and moody cymbal work. Tracks like "Orbit" take things deeper into breathy late night atmospherics with some ominously circling tones, and *Light on Dark* is a

[illegible]

charts

Playlists from the outer limits of planet sound

Subterranean 15

Calla Calla (Sub Rosa)
Sonic Youth Goodbye 20th Century (SYNR)
Darin Gray & Leren Piazza-Cane *Corvairs The Last Man* (Family Vinylyard)
ALP At Home With ALP (Solentmoon)
Fly Pan Am Fly Pan Am (Consolation)
HIM Seven Eyes (Pensible)
Pauline Oliveros & David Ganper At The (Isprek) (JdKLowlands)
Jack Kerouac Reads On The Road (Rykodisc)
Blust A Sophisticated Face (Funeriform)
King Crimson The Projects (OGP)
Scratch Orchestra London 1969 (Die Stadt)
John Corbett & Heavy Friends I'm Sick Of My Hat (Atzavici)
Recall Liquid (Mute)
Third Eye Foundation Little Lost Soul (Domest)
Laika Good Talking Blues (Too Pure)
 Compiled by Harry Hooper, Pop Art/Pasamont, De Concertende, Muzium, The Netherlands. Web: www.concertende.nl

Mondo Kim's 15

D'Angelo Voodoo (Virgin)
Karlheinz Stockhausen Helikopter-Streichquartett (Auvidis)
So Takahashi Nubus (Carpark)
Phillip Frazier Come Ethiopians (Freedom Sounds)
David Coulter Intervention (Fringecore)
Timeblind Blasted EP (Orinthian Muzick)
Shirt Trax Good News About Space (Or)
Antipop Consortium Tragic Epilogue (75 Ark)
Various Love, Peace, and Poetry Vol. 3 (QDK Media)
Schooby D Say It Loud (Vinyl Resurrection)
Celli Astral Disaster (Threshold House)

Dauwlich Come Of The Century (Bangalore)
Graven Personal Rock (Source)
Various Dead And Gone Vol. 1 (Trikont)
Thomas Lehn & Gerry Hemingway Tom And Jerry (Entzyle)
 Compiled by Mondo Kim's, 6 St Mark's Place, New York, USA. Tel: 001 212 588 9685 e-mail: craig@kimworld.com

Neptune 15

Bola Sete Ocean Memories (Samba Moon)
Thomas Brinkmann Suez/Tree (Ernst)
(circle square) The Distance After (Output)
Vladislav Delay Renta (Chain Reaction)
Fum O'Berg The Magic Sound Of (Mago)
Kraftwerk Expo 2000 EP (E94 Electronic)
Angus MacLise Invasion Of Thunderbolt Pagoda (Silt/Innervision/Quicksilver)
Will Oldham Ode Music (Drag City)
Pan American 360 Business/360 Bypass (Kranky)
Royal Trax Stereo Video (Drag City)
Marcus Schenckler Sator Rotas (A-Music)
David Sylvian Approaching Silence (Virgin)
Various Love Comes Striving Over The Mountain (Rune Grammofon)
Various Quotile: Another Collection Of Modern Afro Rhythms (Come)
To La Tengo And Then Nothing Turned Itself Inside-Out (Matador)
 Compiled by Brett Moran & Michael Segal, Neptune Records, Royal Oak, MI, USA. E-mail: neptune@nrcnet.net

Susumu Yokota

Rectangle 15

Drangos Planka (Uptark)
Katerine Les Créatures & L'Homme A Tros Mans (Reverb)
Srik M Frame 31' CO (Helmielme)
Justin Kohnke Späken Der Erinnerung (JC)
Van Oehlen Are You Experienced? (Blue Chopsticks)
Costes 4 Executions Sommarines (Costes)
Akhsh 5 Eleter (Universal Jazz)
As Borden Souvenirs De Paris (Winter & Winter)
Han Bennick & Derek Bailey Post Impressionist 1: When We Smile (Inous)
Heligabale To Pee (Agony)
Brigitte Fontaine/Stereolab Calimero (Duophonie)
Hair Désir 666 667 Club (Barclay)
Dragibus Live In Japan And Little Sounds 10' (Autobus)
Derek Bailey & Han Bennick Post Impressionist 2: Air Mail Special (Inous)
 Compiled by Neil Archetti and Quentin Rabot, Rectangle 14 Rue Frachet, 75009 Paris, France. E-mail: info@rectangle.org. Web: rectangle.org

The Office Ambience

Cord Decca Elevator 3 (Milo Plateaux)
Gonzales Usher Allen (Kitty-Yol)
Ross Bolleter Left Hand Of The Universe (RWGP5)
Suzumu Yokota Magic Thread (Leaf)
Celli Astral Disaster (Threshold House)
Dave Douglas Soul On Soul (RCA Victor)
Einsteizende Neubauten Silence Is Sexy (Mute)
Volcano The Boar: The Inheritor Decline (United Games)
Fred Pith Stone, Brick, Glass, Wood, Wine (Graphic Scores 1986-96) (Angelica)
Sieve Roden/in be tween notice The Radio (Sonos)
The Creators Present Milking The Crates Vol. 2 (Bad Magic)
Autopoles La Via A Noir Transposed EP (Milo Plateaux)
Various The Spirit Of The Steppes (Niscombo)
Graven Personal Rock (Source)
Various Jazzactuel (Charly)
 Compiled by The Wire Sound System



PHOTO: VINCE PATRIZI

print run

New music books read, raved about, roughed up



Street smart: Eric B. & Rakim

Rap Attack #3

By David Toop

SCRIPPS 134L, Pbk. \$14.95

Who would have thought that when *Rap Attack* was first published in 1984, 16 years later it would be in its third edition? *Rap Attack* was a landmark because it was the first book that took HipHop seriously. Where everyone else thought that it was a fad with a life expectancy say, of the calypso vogue that followed in the wake of Harry Belafonte,

David Toop suspected HipHop to be the sort of rigorous, analytic that rock scribes were wasting on Bruce Springsteen.

Like so much of African-American culture, it took a white British guy to give HipHop the respect it deserved. Unlike most white British guys who interpret black American music for the rest of the world, Toop got it right. "Ten thirty pm on a cold Saturday night and three b-boys are working their pitch near Times Square. New York. The spectators have paid to watch Clint Eastwood blow

away a selection of black stock-up-men and multicultural rapists. They settle down to a few live moments with uptown culture." From the book's very first paragraph it was clear that he was keenly aware of the ironies of American society, and his analysis of HipHop placed it firmly in the context of the Land of the Free's war on the urban poor. Perhaps more importantly, however, Toop showed that HipHop wasn't simply a novelty by situating it in a century of African-American cultural practice. Peering below its sneeze-and-mirrors surface of electronics and video game FX, he traced the roots of HipHop from James Brown and Isaac Hayes through radio DJs and Bo Diddley all the way back to double Dutch chants and African gods.

More than just a history lesson, *Rap Attack* captured a moment in time garishly and there are many priceless passages. Toop's details about the Ms Rocman machines at Times Square's innocence ("I said, 'scuse the expression, this is some weird shit') and

Patricia Bates's amazing phrase ("Sequence locking their records at the Dancearea or The Force M.D.s boombox covered in Michael Jackson stickers. In spite of all the recent Old School reminiscing, *Rap Attack* remains the definitive account of the early days of HipHop.

In 1991 *Rap Attack 2* appeared with four new chapters that covered everything that had happened since the first edition: Run D.M.C., Schoolly D, Public Enemy, Boogie Down Productions, Eric B. & Rakim, the Native Tongues posse, Hammer. The new material wasn't as detailed, but it was just as smart and shockingly, *Rap Attack 2* was not only the only decent book about HipHop, but just about the only one.

Nine years later, and HipHop is the biggest selling genre in the U.S. There has been a flood of HipHop books in the past year, but they have all come up short in one way or another. In part, *Rap Attack #3* follows suit, it only has 24 new pages covering gangsta rap, The Wu-Tang Clan, turntable, 2Pac, and,

bizarrely, the 70s group Watts Prophets. Whatever the reason — lack of time, lack of money, lack of interest — you can't help but feel that it's a bit of a cop out. You desperately want Toop to get more involved to sink his teeth into Master P, to unravel the mysteries of Jay-Z, to engage and interrogate where so many serious literati flinch at face value or make crass, facile jokes. Nonetheless, shamefully, it's still the best book on HipHop.

PETER SHAPIRO

Rapid Eye Movement

By Simon Chwyet

CREATION BOOKS Pbk. \$17.99

Conceived and born on a London council estate on 23 January 1979, *Rapid Eye* took on several forms during its existence: from punk forerunners to mail art campaign and eventually a series of coffee-table volumes. It was the energies of writer and editor Simon Dwyer, however, that kept the whole project vital and relevant. An individual of strong opinions and a passionate belief in the powers of Art and Magic, Dwyer succumbed to an AIDS-related illness in Brighton in 1997. This collection of his writings follows that slow process of disorientation, as it manifested itself both socially and spiritually over one decade to the next. "From *Atavism* to *Zyloken II*" offers a wide-ranging account of Genesis P-Orridge's career up to the time of *Godstar* and the Temple Of Psychic Youth's overseas expansion, while "Through A Screen Dancin'" offers a spiky portrait of PTV posterboy Derek Jarman discussing alchemy and Bronski Beat in his apartment high above the Charing Cross Road. Together they offer an alternative account of the recent past, which differs radically from the one handed down to us by the media.

Instead of that mainstream crop of the cockroaches which the free-market BOs are traditionally remembered for, Dwyer celebrated the emergence of new technologies and creative forms, as *Psychic TV* got into video rituals and dance rhythms and Jarman pointed his Super 8 camera at the Soviet Union. He applauds their passing on of information "like a viral infection, one to one", pushing society into new ways of thinking and acting. Similarly "Plague Yard" his account of life in America during the early 90s, is coloured by very interventionist moments, such as David Hockney adjusting his hearing aid during a Puccini opera, or a bar full of cross-dressing Angelenos dancing to "La Woman" by The Doors. On occasion Dwyer allows himself to go off on a case, especially with regard to the parlous state of modern art. David Bowie's contribution to punk and the demise of cultural radicalism. Such provocative moments come as painful reminders of his absence.

KEVIN HOLLINGS

Japan Edge — The Insider's Guide To Japanese Pop Subculture

Edited by Annette Roman

DAWSON BOOKS PAPER \$19.95

Since the opening of its borders in the late 19th century, Japan has exercised an unrelenting grasp upon the imagination of the West. Imagination being the key word. In the absence of specific media images beyond the usual faceless economic warrior myths and wacky robot toilet fantasies, the country is still a virtual blank slate on which the world is free to inscribe its fantasies. Macabre, Zen, paradise, sexually liberated playground, or the SF future vision of a neon-wirelaid Technoparade captured on Japan Edge's cover, the fantasies are banal in their scope. But while the Tokyo government still insists on exporting only the cultural stereotypes of a tourist brochure—real Japan, of the two ceremony geisha and sumo wrestling, the breadth of Japanese subculture has been quietly adding to the trade imbalance. If anything, the covert penetration of Japanese popular culture has increased in recent years, with crazes for computer games, Pokémon and Tamagotchi. Driven by its unofficial trade perceptions of Japan are slowly beginning to change.

Japan Edge attempts to provide an introduction to the confusingly myriad forms of four decades' worth of obsessive subcultural production by (contenting on the one hand) anime, animation (anime), cult film, noise, other music, and manga. Each chapter, by a different specialist, provides a brief historical overview, an extended essay on the author's involvement with his or her topic, and some pointers towards where to begin with the vast amount of material currently available. The authors, including Channel Music founder and Onyaku Gakuin editor Mison Jones on noise and Carl Gussow Horn on anime, are all committed collectors and documenters of their chosen genre. The chapters are split up with lengthy daily entries on a recent trip to Tokyo by Japanese-American Yui Onik (who also pens the alternative music chapter) and concluded with a somewhat inconclusive round table discussion.

The book makes no pretense at providing a neutral, dispassionate account of Japan's myriad subcultures. Rather, each author relates their personal enthusiasms to an American context. The section on anime places Horn's growing interest against a highly selective 80s and 90s US political and cultural history in the music section Onik compares early '70s rock to Yousu Inoue's *B No Sekai to Frontman Comes Alive*. The methodology produces some quite fascinating dividends, especially in the case of Onik, a Japanese-American, and the Mexican-American film commentator Patrick Mielon. Long used to finding a balance between cultures, they are uniquely placed to comment on a culture which has always absorbed and transformed outside influences.

Some nagging concerns: the breadth of each section (Jones's relatively complete chapter on

noise aside) means that the selection can never be anything more than personal, and it might have been nice to have included a native Japanese commentator to add another perspective. Still, this is an accessible and useful introduction which also provides a wealth of addresses and URLs to get lost in.

ALAN CUMMINGS

The Essential Jazz Records Vol 1: Ragtime To Swing

By Max Harrison, Charles Fox and Eric Thackston

MANDEL PAPER \$25

The Essential Jazz Records Vol 2: Modernism To Postmodernism

By Max Harrison, Eric Thackston and Stuart Nicholson

MANDEL PAPER \$25

Guides to recordings are always enjoyable, if you accept that stupefied disbelief at certain inclusions or omissions can be as pleasurable as any agreement. In their introduction to the latest volume of *The Essential Jazz Records*, Max Harrison and Stuart Nicholson insist that it is primarily "a book about music," and yet secondarily a record guide. They view it as an account of an art form, so that provocative word "essential" assumes far weightier significance than when attached merely to a fashion-driven guide. Volume 1, first published in 1984, has come to seem a classic of its kind, and it reappears, preserved in conceptual formality, unpolished by the advent of the compact disc. 250 vinyl masterpieces are listed for the discographies of those with patience and the resources to track them down. But even in Volume 2, the editors have not been unduly concerned with what is currently obtainable in the shops, or even with availability on CD. This is a declaration of the composer's integrity to be sure, but it surely runs the risk of sterility when the commentary and analysis can be readily applied to the music. Perhaps this dogmatic attitude will serve as a salutary jolt to galvanize recalcitrant record companies into appropriately magnanimous action, and will open some walled vaults.

Harrison, Nicholson and their late collaborator Fox and Thackston unquestionably write with the authority of informed and insightful listeners. Nicholson's appreciation of Anthony Braxton's needs work on Duke Holland's *Conference Of The Birds*, for example, is entirely appropriate. However, the limitations of their brand of historical orthodoxy can be gauged from the fact that it admits Braxton as leader only for his sporadically charming *In The Tradition*. Sun Ra whose importance is beyond dispute gains admission with the 1980 live set, *Survive In Different Dimensions*, which is fine but hardly essential, even within his own oeuvre. Thackston observes that this recording "obscure enough as it is for most of us is one

of the more earthbound of Sun Ra's scenarios."

With the new volume, the compilers have ventured onto the precariously rickety terrain of the postmodern, yet their faith remains that jazz has "a central identity" which can be salvaged from experimental convoluted and revisionist histories. In their introduction to Volume 2, Harrison and Nicholson conceive this man seen in terms of a tree maturing and spreading its branches, yet nurtured by increasingly resilient roots. You don't have to invoke Deleuzian rhizomes to recognise this as a disconcertingly idiosyncratic and intrinsically reductionist metaphor. That the tree is denoted as an oak compounds the sense that a very British mode of viewing jazz history is being endorsed here as the essential tradition.

Still, the editors are not averse to citing André Malraux and his notion of the museum without walls when explaining their method. They argue that "valid generalisation" is so difficult to achieve that they "have repeatedly tried to subvert chronology and stylistic unity." This is so up to a point. The Willem Breuker Kollektief appears under the heading "The Big Band Survives" along with Woody Herman and Dizzy Gillespie, who both recorded four decades earlier. Billy Bang and George Lewis feature in a "New Textures" section that also includes Claude Thornhill and of course Gil Evans. An effort has clearly been made to offer more flexible and inclusive generic categories than are usually found in jazz histories, but, despite such strategies for subverting chronology, the volumes do trace a lineage from ragtime to postmodernism: from the "Savannah Syncopators" (entry number one) at the look of that time, to Peter Applebaum and The Herogeophy Ensemble (entry number 500) in its upmost most branches. Unlike reference books such as Richard Cook and Brian Morton's *Penguin Guide To*

Jazz On CD which are arranged alphabetically by artist, *The Essential Jazz Records* embeds individual musicians within the story of the music. Cook and Morton's judgments seem seriously considered yet still affably personal. On the other hand, Harrison and his colleagues, although they acknowledge that their choice of recordings is "obviously highly selective" appear motivated by a more detached compulsion to assign importance to certain recordings, according to their vital role in fostering the jazz organism.

A strength of *The Essential Jazz Records* is that its format allows the editors to justify and gloss their selections as some length: the two volumes together run to nearly 1500 pages. If readers at times find themselves rethinking agreement, they can at least garner useful details from this thoughtful and thought-provoking commentary. Harrison in particular is an expert in provocation as well as elucidation. He depicts the lumber of critical misunderstanding surrounding major musicians and rebukes lesser players for their shortcomings. Albert Ayler and Ornette Coleman are hailed as jazz masters, but Braxton free improvisers get short shrift. Derek Bailey is marginalised as an "arcane visionary" and Arcane's *Art Of The Testimony* is included rather than that group's more memorable *The Lost Music* which featured Bailey. More startling, given the genealogy of his playing, is the omission of Evan Parker except as a participant on Peter Brötzmann's *Machine Gun*. He surely merits more generous inclusion if only as a leaf-off affecting the sturdy oak. These are perhaps predictable grouches, detracting little from the book's fulfillment of its declared task, but where is Carla Bley? Keith Jarrett? Sun Ra? Tracy? Mike Westbrook? Plenty to enjoy then.

JULIAN COWLEY

Anthony Braxton



multi media

Rob Young enters the sound gallery at N01se and Audible Light

Over an acoustic guitar with salt and pluck the strings, the salt forms swell into distinct geometrical shapes. A visual medium acts as a direct register of sonic and therefore physical information. Two exhibitions in the university towns of Oxford (Audible Light at McMA) and Cambridge (N01se at Kettle's Yard) highlight the tendency of an increasing amount of contemporary art and sound sculpture to act as filter systems for information. British art curators appear to be waking up to the possibilities of sound related art forms. Live In Your Head: a retrospective of early 70s conceptual art at East London's Whitechapel Gallery has its share of musical input. COUM Transmissions' classic porn mag intervention via a Cozzy Party Turn centrepiece is one of the highlights, as well as some extraordinary photos of a Genesis P. Orridge shamanic self-mutilation performance in front of a family audience at a German festival, and a selection of poster designs by the French concrete poet Henri Chopin. All of which paves the way for the forthcoming large retro London at Hayward Gallery. Sonic Boom: curated by We winner David Toop which opens at the end of April.

Distributed across three museums in Cambridge (also at the Wellcome Trust's two 10 Gallery in Euston, London), N01se displays various artistic technologies being utilised as visual or sonic registers to encode and display information. Joe Banks' Deformation's Notional Grid is familiar from his Art International releases, but here his antennae is installed in St Peter's Chapel adjoining Kettle's Yard. Despite the reduced volume (due to the 11th century building's shaky foundations) it's a perfect resonating chamber in which to traipse out to the eternal background hum of the UK's electronic grid. Confronted with the visceral throbs of the nation's electric backbone Joe Banks points out, its strategic importance has caused it to be placed on amber state of vigilance, during times of national difficulty such as the 1974 energy strike; the belemnite pulse attains the magnitude of a life essence.

Banks also exhibits the results of his parallel research into the snesive. The Live Of Grace 2000: a finely tuned oscilloscope produces a particularly sensitive DNA spiral that shimmers from side to side like a belly dancer's curvy hips. Banks connects this with the 'line of grace' leitmotif in the works of William Hogarth, suggesting the snesive as a form of absolute beauty. Electricity is thus restored to its origins as a natural phenomenon: the insurance

broker's act of God.

DNA spirals also enter the framework of Synchronic: a tapestry by Paul Miller/DJ Spooky on a textile top. Synchronic takes its single-layered pattern from sources including African weaving and wave amplification software which Miller has been collaborating on with African Fractals author Ron English.

New York trumpeter Ben Neill's collaborative sculpture with photographer Bill Jones is inspired by the genetic theorist Dr Merril Garnett, and reflects his interest in works of art that aren't centred in the creator's ego. Pulse is a synaesthetic work featuring coloured plastic, light-sensitive foosballs. Flicking as they react to the sounds of a drum machine and computer, the lights and pulsing percussion meld in a way that engages the farthest corners of the eye, something like the infra-seeing emergency lights of vehicles at a crash scene.

N01se spills into the realm of digital imaging, from the earliest photographs of particle activity in cloud chambers to the latest digital relief mapping techniques which Manuel Franquelo and Sven Nebel use to recreate anything from the earth's surface to the interior of a prehistoric cave. As you dash



around Cambridge from Kettle's Yard to the Whipple Museum of the History of Science there's not so much to distinguish the art space from the technical museum. Kettle's Yard, for example, contains not only a section of Charles Babbage's Victorian Difference Engine — commonly taken as the origin of the computer — but a pickled slice of Babbage's brain itself. The Whipple meanwhile is running a selected top of trophy vessels created as synaesthetic sensory experiments in the late 60s, part pure maths, part psychology. A lightshow, part Op, an disorientation. The entire sprawling scope of N01se is documented in a well produced companion book of essays and images.



Carsten Nicolai's Atom. Below: Disinformation's Live Of Grace 2000

Audible Light, at Oxford's Museum of Modern Art, focuses on six artists working with sound and concrete material including several names familiar to Wire readers. Entering the white space via the foyer, you are confronted by Bruce Gilman and Graham Lewis's Atom, a bell tiling perfectly airtight to itself in a soundproofed cabinet. CH Von Hasselhoff's Hafler Two member and part of the monarchy of Elgaland-Vargaland exhibits Dimeric Grid Flow, an electric feedback system involving a bar line, catering hotplate, TV set and various hi-fi devices chained together. Like Rießer-Norden's Carsten Nicolai whose Azom (Brooth) is exhibited elsewhere in the gallery, this piece demonstrates how sound equipment can filter and transform electroacoustic effects or levels of power. Like the led with the salty guitar, Nicolai's two laboratory basins of water project waves and ripples on the floor, shaped and altered by the vibrations emanating from nine floor-mounted speakers gently rumbling. One of the most sublime sound experiences visible at either show, Atom is simplicity itself: the only piece that feels like it's been running for an eternity, and will run for an eternity long after you've left the room.

Torres Gronlund (from the Finnish Sankko label) and Pieter Nisunen's magnificently tied

Installation riffs on the notion of the monitoring of public space. Around the largest space in the gallery, the duo has arranged six large satellite dishes, converting the whole room into a giant whispering gallery that feeds back the sounds and conversations of the viewers. Foregrounding the paradox inherent in films like The Conversation and drawing your attention to the increased sensitivity of eavesdropping and monitoring devices in the public domain, Gronlund's piece provided the most interactive interest in the show — although you had to wait for the room to empty of onlookers before its feedback system got properly up to speed.

That an art magazine such as *Nisene* could devote much of a whole issue to sound and electronic music, as it did last year, signals that a lack of dynamic in painting and sculpture has led art spaces towards a commercial impulse. If that means the importance of sonics in modern art is up for reassessment, that's all to the good. ☐ Audible Light runs until 19 March at Oxford McMA (www.mcma.org.uk). N01se runs until 26 March at Cambridge Kettle's Yard (www.kettleyard.co.uk/news) and until 19 May at London two 10 Gallery (www.wellcome.co.uk). Live In Your Head ends on 2 April at London Whitechapel Art Gallery (www.whitechapel.org).

OF THE

Orang (Open Radio Archive Network Group) is part of an art project started in Berlin in 1996 called Radio International City. Designed to give independent artists a chance to publish audio material on the Net, Orang has now developed into a museum, searchable virtual library. Most musical genres are represented (it's especially heavy on electronic music inevitably), as well as radio art, cultural debates, lectures and political reports all archived as Real Audio files. Material tends to be mostly in German, but mirror servers have been set up in London and Latvia. Browse the latest entries, search for a specific artist, or look through the playlists of DJs like A-Musik's Georgy Djok or Monaka's Gudrun Gut. The art section includes sound files from Nicolas Collins and radio works from Vienna's ORF.



edit not-figures

ever wanted to put all that surplus garbage to good use and become an experimental musician at the same time? Look no further. *Blush The Trash* will get you started in the alchemical transformation of garbage-to-music in no time. Founded in 97 by one John Bertles, this site is mainly designed for parents and schoolteachers wanting to teach children a thing or two about trash. When Bertles stumbled on a club called Music For Homemade Instruments, he joined immediately and contributed to their CDs, *Decade Of Debris* and *Pot Of The Litter*. The *Funnellphone*, *Pot Gong* and *Happy New Year Shrum Noise-maker* are just a few of the instruments featured on their performances in and around the New York and New Jersey area.

ANNE HILDE NESET

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Magma

UK: London: Queen Elizabeth Hall

Gathered round the middle-aged Christian and Stella Vander, the youthful ocell of Magma's latest incarnation is naturally nervous. They look like French exchange students, but they act like the remnant of a 13th-century tribe which has somehow sloped through a tear in the space-time continuum. They offer up music from a dim, distant past: the dark ages themselves. 1975. For three hours, they have to keep up with the master, the troll-like Christian Vander, his body warped by years behind the drums. They babble in tongues — that is, Vander's emotionally charged, linguistically dubious Kobaian. They play with an intensity and focus that threatens to lift the roof off.

Cliche is turned inside out and within a short time 120 minutes to warm up, which is a very short time in a Magma gig, the audience is being sucked into a black hole. It is part bargain basement sci-fi, part scary pagan ritual — not people banging a metal bowl with a stick for half an hour and passing it off as something deep, but a genuinely weird rite concerned with the formal opening up of time the display of something hidden. But what? Wounds? Taboo? Something more than a nipple ring or a mobile phone pouch, surely? The audience here is called to witness and to participate in the raising of a psychic monument, to help realise an altered state they know is out of reach. It is the South Bank Centre, after all. But they try nevertheless, eager on to engage in an act of sheer will.

It's a long haul. The three series each last 45 minutes or more, each one a precisely timed feat of engineering that proves at once oppressive and inspiring. At moments you just want it to stop, as others the music seems to project so far into the future that every change in tempo, signalled usually by one of Vander's minutely measured thrives on the snare or the *ti-hut*, resounds as an apocalyptic summons. Magma's music is architectural, physically palpable. In "Theuz Hamzah" the group locks into a groove: the momentum of which seems to build before your eyes a vast tower of solid granite which it then prisms apart. "Wursh kull" is Branghel pastoral, a Bachian dance around a maypole in a warm sunlit clearing. Stella takes the podium, warbles and trills over the pounding *dn*, and it's as if Cleo Lane had accidentally wandered into *The Widow Plan*. Even the fittest of souls would be moved. But you'd have to have a heart of stone not to laugh. "Mekuk Destukow Kommandoh" opens with moody sinister cadences, felt as a series of palpable jabs in a thousand battering guts. The room shudders. The group attempts to create time pure and simple, then diverges

Magma's Christian Vander

PHOTO: JONNY O'LEARY

into a jazz fusion jam session designed to let the youngsters show us their skills, before the old guard behind the kit draws them back in and the four singers come to the front of the stage to shout out to the climax.

Vander is not only a flawless drummer of great energy and style, he is overwhelmingly confident in his aesthetic. He displays apparently simple elements and stripped-down rock instrumentation to great dramatic effect — tonight, unlike their last London show, there's no *Lost City* backdrop and (sadly) no singers dressed in gingham insect motifs. Except for Sun Ra and a very few others, in terms of vision the rest are mere posers, wheeled reads flapping uselessly in a tornado. Even Vander is frankly let down a little by a group incapable of entirely absorbing themselves in the drama; they too busy are in following the lead singer's tight twists and turns of the arrangements that he drives along with outie grimaces, Rebel-sauvage gestures and animal-magical poses from behind the kit. Uniquely, perhaps, he puts his finger on an existential G-spot: the point at which the sacred, the aesthetic, and the meaningless coincide. If at times it sounds like religious music — "planchant or Godspell" — the daily evokes is sexual, physical and evidently so indifferent that it has to be coaxed into twinkling itself. Nothing could be more absurd, more prone to failure. How much easier to write about the moon's role in the confusion of postmodernism, to celebrate the self, to noodle through a like kept on hold with the limy on-hold music, to be coaxed into twinkling itself. Nothing could be more absurd, more prone to failure. How much easier to write about the moon's role in the confusion of postmodernism, to celebrate the self, to noodle through a like kept on hold with the limy on-hold music, to be coaxed into twinkling itself. Nothing could be more absurd, more prone to failure. How much easier to write about the moon's role in the confusion of postmodernism, to celebrate the self, to noodle through a like kept on hold with the limy on-hold music, to be coaxed into twinkling itself.

So there you have it, all those toothy webeyes babbling about shamans: the post-cocked quasi-religious gurus selling their spirituality to earnest bank clerks, the avant-pose posers still struggling with modernism and mortgages, the one-track discs and their Goth grooves calling the kettle black, the tyro artists taking the 20th century off their

transmitter's lists, the social workers blinding in the shadow of the old folk's home, the key neoclassical wannabes dragging on the exhausted flag end of jazz, the weirdly medieval charlatans begging for a Bill & Ted revival as they burble at the Beowulf Evening Supper — all eclipsed by a fiftysomething French couple playing Progressive rock. *Plage*.

by RAXTER

New York Festival of Electronic Composers and Improvisors

LISA, New York Knitting Factory

New York City, as every artist knows, is a provincial town in which every performance has to be carefully staged, even the slightest change of venue noise can cause its Greenwich Village audience to rule it an uptown event, and pass on it. All the more remarkable, then, that the Whitney Museum (way uptown) and the boko Knitting Factory (way downtown) found a way to coordinate a pair of sound arts events. As part of its American Century exhibition, the Whitney set aside a gallery for listening to almost 100 American recorded sound works. Titled *I Am String in A Room*, after Alvin Lucier's famous piece, it unfortunately drew attention to the fact that string in a slightly denatured gallery listening to records is not all that exciting. But it was something.

The downtown live performances at the Knitting Factory thus look on even greater importance. The first evening began inauspiciously, with an unannounced, long-held video of Cluster's performance at the Knit several years before. It had little bearing on the night's events, except that its fixed camera positions and slow pans across hands slowly turning knobs underlined just how visually demanding electronic performances can be (a Platonic observation, but true).

The unannounced first performer (but then, they were all unannounced, weren't they?) was guitarist David Grubbs, lead of Squirrel Bait and Gastr Del Sol, who played several



Paradise Owners

pleasant solo pieces whose electronic elements were understated to the max. Morton Subotnick followed on stage, pulled a laptop from his backpack, seated himself at a table, and discovered the mouse wasn't working. No matter. He explained that we would hear a work in progress, his *String Quartet* with a poem on CD-ROM, which could be mixed and varied by the speed and motion of the key, the mouse. The musician on the computer worked nicely, however, and the strings were sent through hundreds of swirling transformations.

Tony Conrad can always be counted upon for some Fluxus fun, and this night found him shaming with an electric razor while bring on a contact mic. Not exactly Stockhausen's *Helicopter-Sprechquartet*, but amusing nonetheless. The principal part of his performance was an endlessly repeated small figure on the violin which triggered off a variety of lo-fi oscillators. Absolutely Old School!

Paradise Owners closed the evening by setting himself into a chair with his Just-tuned accordion and produced the first stunning sonic of the night. Noise by her Doris Listening buddy, Juliana Stephen Vialto the curator incidentally, of the Whitney sound art exhibition, a wall of sound seemed to emerge from everywhere, most of it underivable, except that somewhere underneath there was always the faint reusuring wheeze of metal rods.

It occurred to me outside that just a few blocks further down the street was La Monte Young, whose absence from this festival was baffling. But perhaps even the Knit was too far uptown for him.

The festival programme stopped just short of debunking electronic hype by pointing out that phrases such as "the next big thing" and "the future of music" were assigned to a genre that was by no means a new arrival. They may

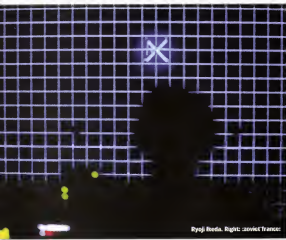
have stopped short of pointing out that electronic music isn't a genre either — just as "music played on guitars" is not a genre, but that's fine: the artists at the festival itself demonstrated that quite nicely.

The second night opened with Data's, the project of DJ Joseph Frank, who attempts the name to reflect both information and spirit. Although Frank's pleasant, self-teaching skills could have held up fine on its own, for this performance he teamed with a dancer and performance artist. He pitched and rolled in a manner sometimes funny, sometimes sexual, sometimes funny, sometimes grotesque, sometimes merely gimmicky — but at all times commenting on the relationship of the human body to sounds that originated as dance music, and have often outgrown that function. While the energy of the performers started high, they gradually flagged and outlasted their welcome — and their shoes — by quite a few minutes.

Next up, without much fanfare, veteran composer and sometime performer Alvin Curran camey built one of the festival's best performances. With *Mapped And Purl*, a site-specific piece drawing on samples of years of Knitting Factory performances. For regulars, this could easily have become a guessing game, but Curran was too smart for that — shimmers, hisses, possibly-3mm squawks, speaking voices, rock snorts and washes of noise left their initial pungency in the dust and merged into a graceful, balanced composition with a dizzying array of associations. Themes seemingly long abandoned manifested themselves again with startling and perfect timing. Sounds of nature, both rural and urban, intervened, reminding us that tranquility can exist in any space (no easy feat on this hot, crowded, sold-out night).

After the Elliott Sharp solo Technics performance was mildly anticlimactic. His





Ryoji Ikeda. Right: zoviet+france

cybernetic, guitar-computer works are always pleasurable both to hear and watch, but after Carter's rich, warm and adventurous soundscape, Sharp's playing was comparatively lacking in communicative resonance. In fact, Sharp came closer than any of the disc computer-banisher players to embodying the stereotype of a techno-speaker who focuses on his machines themselves at the expense of how the machines can be used. He's transcended this in the past, particularly when playing with collaborators who challenge him, but here he wasn't surprising anyone, much less himself.

There weren't a lot of surprises in the night's first set either—a trio of percussionists, Charles K. Noyes, harpist Zeena Parkins and Jim O'Rourke on Powerbook—but no other set demonstrated as clearly that the supposed opposition between electronic music and, well, the other kind is a bit spurious. The success of group Improv rests upon the interactions between the players, and this is true no matter which instruments are used. Though the set opened with some geezy-acquainted beats and fumbles, the trio found its footing quickly and proceeded to raise the ante consistently all the way to the end. O'Rourke and Parkins share an appreciation of the playful, the flimsy, the seemingly perverse, while Noyes bristled happily in the background for quite a while before asserting himself with immaculate timing. The supposed lack of visual interest here: electronic music can suffer, didn't hold water. Here either. O'Rourke's face was a constantly changing vista of concentration, frustration and delight, Parkins's manner of approaching and diving starting sounds from her lat electronic harp made her by default a dancer as well as a musician.

JOHN SCISSOR/PHILIP HENNING

zoviet+france: + Ryoji Ikeda UK, Japanese Queen Elizabeth Hall

A surprisingly large crowd turned up at the South Bank to see a double bill trumpeted as "the unmissable sonic and visual experience of the year." It was odd programming: the clear tones and spaces that mark out the terrain in Ikeda's minimal sine-poetry are quite a distance from the smeared palettes of outsider electronics pioneers zoviet+france. It certainly turned out to be an evening of distinct halves.

First up was Ikeda, who sat behind the mixing desk in the middle of the auditorium in a pale green pullover. Ikeda is unusual among electronic musicians in that he treats his compositions as if they were built to last. These are not pieces to be discarded or endlessly reimagined, but carefully sculpted works that bear a little repetition. He began with "Midagichon", a piece he started working on in 1999. It's perhaps the purest example of his work, constructed from very simple tones, some at the extremes of audible range and beyond, with loops of great simplicity laid over each other to create an extremely effective interlocked mesh of machine noises. Unfortunately, in the basest places it was too loud and the speakers couldn't handle the tones—the crisp edges of the recorded version were lost in the mud. The video for this opening section was correspondingly simple. X and Y axes flashing across a huge dark screen with a pulsing point at its centre. I was pretty mesmerized. (The lighting design and video were the work of other members of the Japanese Dumb Type collective, who performed last year at the Barbican.) Ikeda then moved into "4-1"

in waves of digits flicking around shot up the screen like a waterfall of numbers in reverse. The passage between musical episodes was marked by intense white flashes that lit up the auditorium. The link between images and music was close and intelligent—as the range of reference in the music grew wider, so the visuals began to depart from abstraction and include fleeting images. It was a powerful physical event, probing the effect on the body of visual and sonic repetition and sucking the spectator into a vibrant monotone world. While this aspect of the show was intensely private, the feeling of exposure to such large sounds and images gave the music a sense of group involvement. It was more of a collective experience than is usually possible in such an auditorium.

Long-time lurkers on the fringes of experimental electronics, zoviet+france's reputation has grown with their longevity (they've released around 20 albums to date). Their live appearances are rare, and there was a palpable air of anticipation in the crowd. They performed from the stage, sitting on the floor in changing pools of deep colour. Their music was built up with processed input from both electronic and acoustic



instruments. Sadly, the best of the evening was already past. As the music ground slowly onward, it became apparent that it was simply not finding its feet—in fact, it was never going to find them. We watched and waited and waited and watched. Nothing came along. A huge range of sounds were incorporated into the mix, from gurgling water to bass drum. And that's where the problem lay: it sounded vague, diffuse and aimless, especially in comparison to the concentration and clarity that Ikeda brought to his sound constructions. zoviet+france held out the promise of a richer experience, but this wasn't it. In the end it was hard to salvage anything from the morass. The accompanying video did nothing to relieve the boredom: the clothes pulled up—ripping shots of swimming pool tiles, an escalator, rootless folk at a railway station. I've seen more experimental TV ads.

All that remained was for the evening to fizzle out with a brief and pointless collaboration between the two acts

WILL HOUTGROET

Sundays In The Dream House: Two Memorial Concerts

USA, New York: Mela Foundation

If you're concerned with alternative histories of modern music (and who isn't these days?), sooner or later you're bound to encounter La Monte Young. His own excursions into drones, sound environments, sustained noise and Just Intonation have influenced everyone from the Velvet Underground to Soundgarden DJs, but you won't find his music in the radio at Tower or Virgin (although some of his out-of-print Gramercy releases have been reissued, marking astronomical sums on the secondhand market). Yet he's practically a household name, compared to two of his closest friends of the 60s, electronic composer Richard Maxfield and saxophonist/composer Terry Jennings. Maxfield is somewhat known for his piece *Night Music*, which opened the class. David Behrman-produced *New Sounds in Electronic Music* compilation on Odyssey, and one album on Advance (recently reissued on CD by New World). Jennings never got anywhere near a studio, and although championed by folks like Cornelius Cardew, John Tilbury and Harold Budd in his time, he's been largely forgotten since. Both men died in their early forties in 1969 and 1981, respectively, and Young has periodically presented concerts of their work, of which these were the most recent.

As John Cage's replacement as electronic music teacher at the New School, Maxfield was a well-known character in the NYC avant-garde of his day, lining up the founders of Fluxus next to each other in his class, and oddball figures like Jackson MacLow, Charlemagne Palestine and Ira Cohen were in attendance. The concert opened with a live performance of 1962's *Perspectives For La Monte Young*, which found Young and cellist Charles Curtis seated on the floor bowing a contrabass and a cello laid in front of them, producing the sort of sustained swoosh many listeners would associate with Renais or AMM. They were joined by Maxfield's cut-up tape of Young doing string chorales on the time. The tape is brilliantly assembled, with each noise crashing into the next, creating a series of real anarchy and evincing Maxfield's enthusiasm for the material, in fact, the live accompaniment proved distracting. Joseph Kubera performed *Piano Piece For David Tudor* next, which appears on the *Advance LP* but is much better experienced live. Kubera had been personally taught the piece by Tudor some years ago, and he gamely crawled under the piano, intoned at the instrument with a hammer, pulled a chain through the support bars underneath, and dropped toddlers on the strings. Again, the tape stole the show, another charming assemblage of fraction sounds that holds up much better four decades down the line than the piano alone (which does mean a sort of kooky charm). After an intermission, several of Maxfield's electronic and tape pieces were played, mostly from 1958-59. Both *New Music* la



La Plante Young and friends

the most hair-raising sounds available but also to the recreation of natural surroundings. Above all, there's a manic directness to the pieces — you get the feeling that he's bypassed the grofy or academic avenues of electronic music and headed immediately for the choicest sounds armed with a formidable technique.

Equally influential was Californian Terry Jennings, whose powers as a saxophonist and composer are sadly underlined 40 years after his NYC debut, which occurred during Young's legendary concert series at Yoko Ono's Chambers Street loft. The proportions of the Dream Houses memorial were even more epic than for Manfred, lasting more than five hours. The programme opened with a 30-minute tape of that loft concert, including a bit incredibly delicate piece for two saxophones (consisting of three separate sustained two-note intervals) played by Young and Jennings, and then a set of piano pieces. The piano works are particularly comparable to Morton Feldman, but marked by tremendous fragility and more of a sense of poetry. Each is quiet, constructed from simple intervals which dissolve into silences, inviting careful listening and a heightened awareness of tonal identity. The pieces were then played live by Kubera, Young and Michael Schumacher, each giving a different slant on Jennings's own performances. Kubera gave a relatively straight run through, while Young's languid take, full of long silences, had that emotional depth. *Song in a Ballad*, which again featured Schumacher at the piano and some deft solo improvising by Curtis.

This made for a nice transition to the second half of the concert, which featured tapes of Jennings's solo sax playing and started with a rare tape of *Piece For Cello And Saxophone* with Charlotte Moorman. A series of modal improvisations over changing drones, it's an early and western example ofraga-influenced Western composition. Usually lasting at least an hour, this was something of a mad dash at under five minutes, but a valuable document of how Jennings played it. A series of 1961 dates followed, with Young pounding out hyper-

attenuated blues patterns that might suit even John Lee Hooker's potence. His tone was bellicose and fierce, and his quicker solos referenced bebop, swing, jazz, Romantic and Indian music, nearly simultaneously. These were obviously jabs, but in some ways more radical and sophisticated than: The John Coltrane Quartet's modal efforts at the time. More live performances followed, including two versions of 1965's *Winter Trees* (by Kubera and Schumacher) and another fine Schumacher/Curtis duo, *Winter Sun*. These are more in the neo-Romantic style Jennings was to fully embrace in the '70s, and while *Winter Sun* is quite moving and evocative, they are not as striking as the earlier pieces. The three piano pieces were performed again for additional comparison and, as a symmetrical conclusion, a bit excessive as programming, but given the rarity of hearing Jennings's work, I say better to err on the side of overindulgence.

ALAN LUCHT

John Zorn UK London Barbican

Zorn's back, that part of his anatomy, clad in a casual red pullover above yellow-flecked combat slacks, is, in fact, what is presented to the audience for two thirds of this rare London visit. He's in composer/conductor mode for the first two sets, by his *Masada String Trio* and Bar Kokhba, seated so far at the front of the stage on the floor that he actually chivvies two latecomers into their seats just before the start of one number.

The sum of tonight's show is Zorn's group composed music — literally, music composed for a specific group of supernaturally intoned musicians, friends' music played by and for each other. To the distant observer, there's a strange coyness about Zorn at the moment: one the one hand aggressively flooding the CD market with all manner of wonderful inventive or just plain daff minority musicals via his Tzadik and Avant labels, and coming out increasingly hostile in print against those — the media in particular — who don't understand the music the way they oughta. In person, on stage, however, he keeps his artistic malice extremely close. The vede Barbican stage is understood, all three groups are kept tightly hunched: the final *Masada* quartet are arranged in a perfect, almost obsessive bloc. There's no address to its belated audience apart from personnel introductions, all other verbal action is kept to hushed private jokes between members. Is he in danger of isolating the super-isolated musicianly circle he's gathered about himself within a closed brotherhood? And of treating his audiences, whom he claims should be allowed to enjoy the music without any filtering via secondhand received opinion or manufactured tastes in a similar albeit fashion?

He probably always will, because the spiral of his music seems destined always to wander beyond reach. The melting interplay of the *String Trio*, in which the astonishingly

Mark Feldman walks an increasingly taut rope as he balances a gypsy triplet over what's basically a rock-beating pulse supplied by cellist Erik Friedlander and bassist Greg Cohen, sets things sailing with the breeze.

Bar Kokhba is not the house band for the latest themed watering-hole downtown, but a largely ensemble comprising some of Manhattan's best players. Sides of the show here are perussomest Cyro Baptista — as on-the-one with his shakers, and imitates an Afro — and Marc Nelson, whose tremolo guitar twang adds an electric shimmer to Bar Kokhba's pambulous gypsy rhythm. One track in particular catches the frantic St Vitus dance of Ennio Kusanika's *Blind Cat* White Cat film score, in which emotions turn on a knife edge and a wedding can become a wake at the behest of a drunkenigger finger.

And finally the UK debut of *Masada*, Zorn's ongoing, hi-reggae acoustic quartet that takes its name from the most Jewish suicide of the last century AD. Given the nation's provocation, you might expect tormented nose-grogs more akin to Naked City or Pankeller, but the raw primal scream of those outfalls seems to have healed. Instead *Masada* is a more positive affirmation of (twisted, complex) identity. Dave Douglas's blustering trumpet identifies huge lines of distance into the music, yet trails seen from the ground (Zorn's) pressured horn brings you closer to the engine exhaust ducts. Joey Baron's shifty drumming is a surprisingly backgrounded occupying one or two stirring sax passages. The message we're still here our Jewishness the sum of our tangled heritage and multiple sensual input of the urban present. The remarkable thing about John Zorn now is that it's impossible to view the entirety of his gargantuan endeavours on the strength of one small part of it. I'm inclined to view his work as one of those unfolding Great American Novels that got written about once a year. Tonight, we see maybe a couple of chapters only.

ROE YOUNG

PHOTO: GUY REWITT

Back to jazz: John Zorn



scissors (a.k.a. *Scissors*) is divided over the ocean) and *Quasi* (like, avoid water, wind and insect swarms) — a unique departure from the usual minimalist connotations of synthetic complexity. There is a playfulness to the choice. If sound sources (Cough Music features the spluttering edited out of a tape of a Christian Wolff concert. *Stones Music* consists of clanging rocks) but they are manipulated beyond recognition, keeping the joke out of the music.

Over the course of three hours, this concert provided a strong sense of Manfred's qualities as a composer: extremely discriminating about selection of sounds and their placement despite the use of elaborate techniques as a starting point (he used to cut tape up and place the pieces in a mixing bowl, then painstakingly assemble them at random but reject any sounds he didn't like) and passionately drawn to

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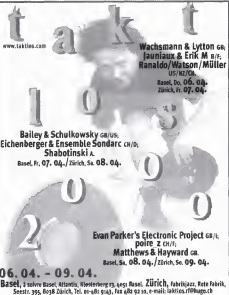
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March's selected festivals, live events, clubs and broadcasts



Thomas Mapfumo

UK Festivals

Africa Roots & Shoots

With African music hotter than ever, London's Barbican gets in on the act with this 12-day festival of jazz, township jazz, rai, Malian blues and chinyanga. Featured performers include King Sunny Adé, Herbie Hancock, Busi Mphahlele, Chikako Bennett, Lu Bonche, Thomas Mapfumo, Uroš, Oliver Mtshisi and Ali Farka Touré. There will also be club nights from Franco's former guitarist Mose-Fan Fan, children's workshops and a series of films including works from Souleymane Coussé, Cheikh Dumar Sasseko and Idrissa Ouedraogo. London: Barbican, 4-15 March. Ticket prices vary. Booking: 020 7638 8891.

Boulez 2000

The last of the London phase of the French composer/conductor's 75th birthday party features Boulez conducting The London Symphony Orchestra through Schoenberg's *Pelleas and Melisande*, Berlioz's *Notturno* and Salvatore Sciaccino's *Requiem Opus 100*. London: Barbican, 2 March, 7:30pm, \$35-\$65. 020 7638 8891.

F:East

This pan-Asian festival of arts and culture takes over suburban Ilford with games from Byron Walker, BeHo Japanese kichin from Frank Chikara, Chinese improv, Peking dance, Chinese puppet theatre and a club night from Chinatown. Bar: The Bull, 6 February-10 May. Ticket prices vary. 020 8449 0048.

Music On Screen

25 years after the video for Queen's *'Bohemian Rhapsody'*, the National Film Theatre celebrates the music promo with the month-long programme of memorable influential and notorious videos. Featured will be clips from Björk, Beastie Boys, Aphex Twin, Fatboy Slim and Madonna. Spotlighted directors include Spike Jonze, Chris Cunningham, David Fincher and Michael Gondry. London: NFT, Mondays, 6-27 March. Screenings: 15:15-12:00, 7:30-10:30. 020 7528 3232. Web: www.offnft.org.uk

Roots-Classical Fusions

The London Philharmonic's third annual Roots-Classical Fusions day seeks to find the links between classical and World Music. The day

will include the world premiere of *Beats Roots*, a specially commissioned work by Andrew Preller, a performance of Ligeti's *Raines Symphony* for 100 metronomes and a performance of Carus, Milhaud's *La Création Du Monde* based on African creation myths. There will also be ritual dances from Kenya and an ancient Castilian song cycle, bluegrass and children's workshops. London: Royal Festival Hall, 4 March, \$20-\$65, 020 7960 4242.

Kurt Weill: From Time To Time

Second leg of a cycle which began last October, HK Gruber conducts The London Sinfonietta in a selection of Weill's orchestral suites after a documentary film of his German years (2 March, Queen Elizabeth Hall, from 5pm), while his Broadway period is celebrated by The London Philharmonic under Kurt Masur (29 Royal Festival Hall, 7:30pm). Info: 020 7960 4242.

International Festivals

Andy Warhol: A Factory

Celebrating most aspects of the one-man culture factory, this exhibition focuses not only on Warhol's art, but also his films and musical associations including a performance by Tony Conrad (11 March) and Jay Gulet performing works by John Adams, Philip Glass, John Cage and George Antheil (15 April). Portugal: Porto Museum of Contemporary Art Services, 11 February-30 April. 00 351 22 615 6500.

Linguaggi Jazz

For a month of Saturdays, Turin turns its attention from Juventus to jazz with this series of concerts. Performers include Ron Coltrane, Wayne Horvitz, 41 Ensemble, Charlie Mariano, Norman Simmons and Tommy Elson. Italy: Turin: Piccolo Regio Puccini, 4 March-18 April. Web: www.piemonte.com/cjazz

Mostly Modern Festival

A four-day free jazz and improv festival whose highlight is the inaugural concert of The Barry Guy New Orchestra featuring Marilyn Crispell, Evan Parker, Mats Gustafsson, Paul Lytton, Hans Koch, Herb Robertson, Johannes Bauer, Per Åke Hansson and Raymond Snare. Ireland: Dublin: Black of Ireland Arts Centre, 5-8 March. Info: 00 353 1 821 6620.

No Music 2000

The one and only nihilist Spasm Band's annual three-day experimental shunning this year features the hosts alongside Lee

Randall, Aubrey Voice Crack, Paul Dutton, The Black Axis and Unclean Wiener. Canada: London: Aeolian Hall, 30 March-1 April. Web: www.symphoniccolaboration.com/

Oblique Lu Nights

Presented by Dapin's Noise Museum label, this weekend-long festival features live electronics from FX Randomo, Vert, Schlimmpetzger, Scam, David Shea & Scamier, DJ Speedranch, Jansky Noise, Noise Get, Comscore, Tonk, Lugowski, Electronica, Roger Rotor, Dither, David Toop, Paul Schreier, Third Eye Foundation and more. France: Nantes: Le Luc, 24-26 March. 00 33 02 40 12 14 34. e-mail: info@oblique.com. Web: www.oblique.com

Other Minds Festival VI

The sixth edition of the fest of electronic music is directed by electroacoustic composer Carl Stone. Under his stewardship, performers will include Leroy Jenkins, Hamro (B.D. Scanner), DJ Spooky, Ali Takahashi, Christian Wolff, William Winant and Peter Garland, ee-kronos, celtist Joan Jeanmaud and Onyx Quartet, USA. San Francisco: various venues, 16-18 March. 001 415 934 8134. Web: www.otherminds.org

Sounds & Files

Subtitled Electronic music and its visual aspects, this exhibition curated by Kōlektō SPK focuses on the impact made by electronics. Powerbook, army. The exhibition will feature sound installations, computer-generated images, graphic design from electronic's leading labels, displays of equipment, a recreation of a bedroom studio and a 3D playback record stall. Austria: Vienna: K.Haus, 10 March-16 April. 00 43 1 587 96 63 21. Web: www.k-haus.at

Special Events

AEON

The final piece of the Rubinstein legacy. Company's trilogy concerning new, old and virtual reality. Wayne McGregor's choreography will be accompanied by electronic music from Jovanotti. Brighton: Gardner Arts Centre, 17 March 8pm, \$10-18. 01273 685861.

Photos by Amy & Thaneer

Omra Tom, Freddy Fresh, O'Connor, Jaxx, 5. Honey Mark, 4. Hero and David Lynch all

feature in this photographic exhibition featuring the alternative music stars of Amy Roberts and Tawnee Ahmed, who've been snapping for *The Wire* and other music magazines for the past three years. London Scala, 2 March-23 April 02 7833 2222

Principles Of Electronic Warfare

An extension of Joe Banks/Dormation's multimedia Blackout exhibition at the ICA, 27 March-2 April, this might not be your average club night, but it will feature extreme sound from Bruce Galtieri, Nomex, Farmers Manual and Mount Vernon Arts Lab (tbc), plus video works from Barry Hale. London ICA, 30 March, Q20 7930 3647. Banks also debuts an electric-city-sapping installation under the City of London between 25 March-16 April, launched at the Ovaltine club, London Dario, 25 Q20 7613 5817

On Stage

John Adams The British premiere of the American composer's *Was Looking At The Ceiling And Down The Sky*, an opera focusing on vocals and geographical sites in LA. London Linbury Studio Theatre, 2-4 March, 7.30pm, \$15-35 Q20 7304 4000

Agrippine Unlithian post-rock from this English quartet. London Red Hail, 15 March, \$7.50 Q20 8963 0940

Arsonists Probably the best live hip-hop act around dazle the UK with their footwork. Hull Mid State of the Wellington Club (2 March), Reading Boring Club (3), Dublin Tierside Music Bar (4), Manchester Turntable at South (8), London Subterfuge (9), Portsmouth Go-Off (20), Brighton Pressure Point (21), Nottingham Old Angel (22), Newcastle University (23), Aberdeen Gaze (24), Dundee Horne (25), Leeds Liquid (25)

Asian Dub Foundation Asian rap posse bring their sound system to the East-meets-West night, also featuring Outcaste and APOD DJs, and live sets by Salvo Funk, eDorian and Ambassadors Of Dread. London Scala, 18 March, 9pm-Sat, \$10-47 Q20 7833 2022

Beek Stadium date from the midsize culture itself. London Wembley Arena, 29 March, \$18.50 Q20 8902 0902

Michael & Benjie Braam Featuring saxophonist Ben Balleny and drummer Martin Pearce, the Tinseltown trio updates the music of Lennie Tristano. London Pizza Express (28 March), Leeds Wadmore (29), London Royal Academy (30), Birmingham CROSO Centre (31)

Breakbeat Rea Ron Sies, DJ Die and Lennie Laess live drum in class experience. Sheffield Union, 13 March, Brighton Concord (4)

Bratpunk Vintage synth-pop whirring from Word positions. Nottingham Heavenly Social (21 March), Leeds Duxch of Voz (22), Newcastle Quay Club (23), Glasgow King Tut's (24), Manchester Hap & Grape (25) How Old Market (27), Bristol Fleece & Finken (28), London Dingwalls (29)

LTJ Bukem + Blame + MC Conrad Aqueduct Janglejats take their Progression Sessions on the road. Canterbury Kent University (11 March), Cambridge Junction (2), Liverpool Mountford Hall (3), Edinburgh Potpourri (4), Derby Union (16), Reading Students Union (10), Stoke Newington Students Union (11), Nottingham Ballroom (17), Newcastle Students Union (18), Bedford Boullies (22), Leeds Muzo (23), Leicester Junction 2 (24), London Shepherd's Bush Empire (25)

Capitol K + As Traffic Connections Mike Paradinas associates Capital K's lock horns with Parallelism label impresario Gerard Ciolek's post-rock project. London Upstart at the Garage, 16 March, 8pm, \$5 Q20 7607 1818

Vladimir Delahay + Magnétique + D Grany electronics from Helsinki's Delay, To Rococo Rock's Stefan Schneider premieres a solo venture, Soul Static's Sounds DJ plugs the gigs. Brighton Lift 119 March, London Notting Hill Arts Club (20)

Elena Tsvetova The Brooklyn Quartet, Palco Ritzko and others celebrate the Russian composer's 50th birthday. London Dakota's Hall, 5 March, 8pm live, Q20 7873 7300

Laurent Gagnier House-Techno DJ with Guffie live. Cambridge Junction (23 March), Glasgow Archers (24), Sheffield Bed (25), Dublin Temple Street Theatre (26), Newcastle Students Union (30), Liverpool Bugged Out (31), London The End (1 April)

Goodspeed You Black Emperor! **Sugar Ruck + TTY Pan Am** (Newyork's favorite Cantopop post-rockers on UK tour Aberdeen Lemon Tree (27 March), Glasgow Garage (28), Bristol Empire Theatre (30), Giffney Roost Club (31), Cork Nancy Spans (1 April), Dublin HQ (2), London Royal Festival Hall (3), Bristol University (5)

Gonzales Naked disco from Kitty-Yo labels DJ along with a slew of other spinners. London Scala, 30 March, 7.30pm, \$7 Q20 7302 8246

Kid Koala + DJ Food + Aron Tahn Multiple disc masters from Ninja Tuna's finest. Hull Wellington Club (16 March), Leeds Cockpit (17), Bristol Blue Mountain (18), Sheffield University (21), Newcastle University (22), Glasgow Archers (23), Manchester Hap & Grape (24), Nottingham The Bomb (25), Brighton Concord (28), Cambridge Junction (29), London Scala (30)

Louziano All-woman chamber ensemble celebrates the rhythms of the world. London Union Chapel, 5, 12, 19 March, \$9/16, Q20 7359 4911

Loophole Improv quartet featuring Pat Thomas, Mick Black, Tony Buck and Renner Kunin. Nottingham Plaza (23 March), Leeds Terrence Club (24), London Red Rave (28), Liverpool Blackcat Theatre (29), Sheffield Ecotopia Non-Profit Club (30)

Katie Matthews Live sampling and vocal velations with Rhythmic Strain Injuns and Luc And The Planets in support. Dundee Arthouse 9 March, 8pm, \$5-10 363 870 8581

Negative Energy + Nova + Opague Doctor shenanigans from Morphogenesis

Michael Prime and friends. Glasgow 13th Note, 5 March, 8.30pm, \$3 0141 553 1638

Courtesy Pine 24th day residence from Hackley's favourite son. London Jazz Cafe, 15, 17 March, Q20 7344 0044

Quickspace Bitter sweet lo-fi-rock. London Drill Hall, 16 March, \$7.50 Q20 8963 0940

Cino Robur + John Butcher Heavyweight improv duo of American percussion Robur and British saxophonist Butcher. Liverpool Blackcat Theatre, 2 March, 7.45pm, \$4/5.10 \$5.10 280 986

Scanner Rishi Rembut comes up a live soundtrack for Godard's *Alphaville* in surround-vision. London PMAX Cinema, 3 March, 10pm, \$12.50 Q20 7960 3100

Compey Segundo Buena Vista Social Club marries members the son. London Royal Festival Hall, 11 March, 8pm, \$30-150 Q20 7960 4242

Loke Slater Brighton's techno maestro on a brief club tour. London Falm (17 March), Birmingham Cue Club (26)

Spacer vs The Orchestra Best constructor Luke Gordon goes head to head with 18 classically trained musicians. London Scala, 28 March, 8pm, \$7.50 Q20 7392 9032

Philby Thomas Turner plays works from Morton Feldman, Michael Freyman and Cornelius Cardew. Sheffield Over The Top 18 March, Manchester Photoplastic University (9), Bradford University (10), London British Music Information Centre (30)

DJ Vedim Cut-up god of Russian Percussion Tour continues with Killa Kelly, Bu, Rum 13 and P9 Thug. London Scotland (2 March), Liverpool Zanzibar (3), Belfast Brunswick (4), Newport (7), 19

Violent Femmes London Gato Brian Ritchie and Guy Hoffman are back with their acoustic psychopomp. Cambridge Corn Exchange (12 March), London Hommesmen (13)

Rheinhart Weber Longtime Jan Garbarek bassist moves out on his own. Nottingham Boringstone Theatre (25 March), Bristol Anifol (27)

Club Spaces

All Angels An evening of new and improvised music in leathery Chicago, featuring Phil Durrant, John Biset, Tom Chant and Simon Fall and Rhonda Davies, Matt Davis, Alessandra Bombale and Mark Wozniak. London St Michael and All Angels Church, 31 March, 8-10pm, \$5/14, Q20 8994 7993

Reishi + Scarper Vinyl Monday's label takes over Bristol's waiting hole for an evening of breaks and beats with Uncut's Youth, Vin and Soko. London Junction, 17 March, 9pm-3am, \$3, Q20 7647 7615

Cash Experimental electronics and electro from DJ Cole (QueenFools, CPH Play One, Amsund, Tom Churchill and multimedia projections). London ICA, 10 March, 9pm-lam, \$4/5.3 Q20 7930 3647

Diffusion Hosted by the Sonic Arts

Network, the free evening of experimental music and video features DJ's Robert Hampson, Tom Wallace and Gae Graham. London Below 54, 28 March, 7pm-midnight, free, Q20 7528 7337

Fistlight In Manchester The Maccafield club moves to the bag city for a night of debauchery with Andy Smith, Sam Dupont and Ian Taylor. Manchester Generation X, 31 March, 9pm-2am, \$7/56 0161 236 4899

Tuak Acid beats reign supreme in the company of Paul Harriott (Lol), Harmonized, Psychonauts, Dree Jay Punk Roc, Duncan Forbes and more. London Play Mac, 18 March, 10pm-6am, \$10-50 Q20 7738 5255

Future Funk Brazilian Techno and drum 'n' bass outdazzle with Oliver Ho, DJ Tee Bee, Motivation, Paul Damage and Get Bezley. Bristol Muzo, 10 March, 10pm-4am, \$5 0771 423 7663

Home Taping The Sneaker Pimps curate the celebrity midnight night. London ICA, 9 March, 9pm-lam, \$3/54, Q20 7930 3647

Hybrid Hissler artists hold present difference breakfasts in the company of Fierce (No U-Turn), Devo Roadie, Jon Tye, Sini & Black and Zombi. London Upstart at the Garage, 23 March, 9pm-2am, \$5/54 Q20 7607 1818

Hybridism Daniel Flommons's trio club mixing up Algerian, Arab, Greek, Turkish, Jewish, club and hip-hop. London Room Deas, Arches, Thursdays, 8.30pm-lam, free, Q20 7652 6526

Instant Music Meeting A night of experimental pop and just plain old experimental music from One King Pops, Anna Homler and Richard Sanderson (3 March), VTI Keds, Steve Wrenford and Dave Tucker (10), Union Wireless, Lyndsay Cockburn & Adam Bohman and Paul Hood



PHOTO: VINCE COLEMAN

out there

(15). Free Brite (24). London Upstairs at the Common, Fridays, 8:30-11pm, \$4/£3 and London Sp6, 15 March, Box \$55/4, 020 7932 9032

Koomscape The usual Krautrock-inflected timbre with Of, Sue Ray, Aaron, Jim Backhouse and Hunter Jupiter. London Upstairs at the Garage, 25 March, 9pm-3am, \$5, 020 7267 1818

Little Sheds At Happiness Mark Webster mixes disco tunes with cult films. This month's experimental shows are by Georges Frangi, Hy Hirsch and George Kuchar, while Webster, Gregory Kurczew and BR Walters take a stab at the decks. London ICA, 18 March, 8pm-1am, \$8/£6, 020 7930 3647

Melting Vinyl Gutsy evening of weirdness with Echoboy and Yousen (5 March), Hae Tunda, Turi and Skylab's Mist. Ducesse (2,21) and Slepshot's The Handsome Family (26). Brighton Lift Club, 8-11pm, \$3 \$5/£3, 01273 779411

Movement Long running cutting edge breakfast show featuring DJ Hyde, Marky Bad Company, Jumping Jack Frost, Bryan Gee, Ray Keith and Tonic, plus Frankie Frost and DJ Seng in the Hip-Hop room. London Hqs, 4 March, 10pm-6am, \$10-£6, 020 7377 9494

NY Sushi Raw breakfast mix with DJ Hyde and The Freejays' Hap Cantor (10 March). Big Beat Boutique special with La Fidelity All Stars, 5 Bagg and Melted Garden (17). DJ Asuka, DJ Mjag, Mike and Thelonic (24), and Adam F, DJ Mike, Andrew Weatherall, Quenston and Utah Jazz (31). Sheffield Unit, Fridays, 10pm-3am, \$7 \$5/£6 \$5, 0114 267 1861. Web www.nysushi.co.uk

Perverted Science Rainer Truby and Michael Reinboth from Munich's Compost label join residents Pete Herbert and others. London 333 Club, 10 March, 10pm-5am, \$10-£6, 020 7739 5949

Rehabilitation Law & Aude host this free monthly sleep in beat night, with live set from Adde Bink and Ols Spongybag & Tench. Jim Backhouse and Magic Hill. London Foundry, 3 March, 8pm-midnight, free

Slack Sabbath Celebrate the day of rest with Puncatoper, Silent Soundsystem and Disasters At Work (12 March), and Vladislav Delay, To Rococo Rot's Stefan Schneider and DJ D (19). Brighton Lift Club, Sundays, 8pm-11pm, \$1, 01273 779411

Slack Sabbath London Brighton's heretical clan of perdition moves to the capital with two-step shergangers from Sullenston Warriors, DJ Decline and Kieran Hobden (12 March), and HipHop cut 'n' pulse with Riq, Max, Blood One & Manipulate. Euroh Kuts and Mackemellow Pillow D (26). London Notting Hill Arts Club, fortnightly Sundays, 4pm-11pm, \$5/£3, 020 7460 4459

Space Low cost House and Techno from Sticky Pluton, Luke Solomon and Kenny Hawkes. London Bar Rumba, 1 March,

10pm-3am, \$5/£3, 020 7287 2715. Web www.bomboni.co.uk

The 3pm Edgy electronica with the legendary Baby Ford. Phobias, 5-Hour Club and BtTone (9 March) plus a special extra night with Vladislav Delay, Soul Street Sounds DJ D Terms and BtTone (21). London Global Cafe, 7:30pm-midnight, \$3/£2, 020 7287 2242

Winged Monkey A night of difficult listening, and obscure performance featuring your hostesses Maria Casale (aka The Jewels Tinkles), Rosanne O'Rourke, and various trickys. Ols London Royal Vauxhall Tavern, 10 March, 9pm-2am, \$4/£3, 0171 254 7700. Casale also appears at Scapegrat, a fucked up night for fucked up people, including no-rules DJing from our man with a stills camera, Johnny Vokoro. London Upstairs at the Garage, 3 March, 9pm-2am, \$5/£4, 020 9516 8254

Incoming

Cocoonage Julian Cope's mini-Meltdown features rare performances from Coil, Las Tenebras Machines and the original line-up of Ash Ra Tempel with Manuel Gotsching and Klaus Schulze. London Royal Festival Hall, 1-2 April, 020 7960 4242

Lovelies Three day sound art programme featuring Tenebris, Ade Ward, Scanner Kim Cascone, Tami Ouyala, Tom Remington and Mikko Mäkelä. Sheffield Workstation Gallery, 6-8 April, 0114 221 0393

Taktile Improv pow-wow featuring performances by Derek Bailey, Lee Ranaldo, Royal Lytton and Catherine Jamnais. Switzerland, Basel, 6-8 April, 020 7960 4242



Brandon LaBelle

Interference Relaunches

This series of themed mixed media events encompassing talks, screenings and live music, set up by The Wire and Luc Cretney, will be kicking off again with two events in April. An evening with transgendered electroacoustic composer Tami Tenebris (6 April), 8pm, and a presentation by Id Bellamy's Brandon LaBelle with special guests (27). Info: 020 7684 0201

Our items free for inclusion in the April issue should reach us by Friday, 10 March. NB Listings information must include a contact phone number, start time and ticket price. Listings cannot be taken over the phone

Radio

National

BBC Radio 1 92.9 FM

John Peel *Sundays/Mondays* 10pm-midnight The by now venerable mix of rock, indie, Techno, Jungle, Electronica, and the Legendary sessions

Giles Peterson *Wednesdays* midnite-2am Up- and down-tempo beats, experimental drum 'n' bass, funk, psychedelic soul, and plenty more in between

Andy Kershaw *Thursdays* midnite-2am Rare music and global sounds, including folk, roots, reggae, old rock and more

Fabio & Grooverider *Fridays* 2-4am Two hours of vanguard drum 'n' bass

Westwood Rap Show *Fridays* 7-10pm *Saturdays* 9pm-midnight Tim's fast breaking Hip-Hop tips

BBC Radio 3 90.9 FM

Late Junction *Monday-Wednesday* 10:15-11:30pm Verity Sharp and Fione Tellington present news and discussion of a diverse musical selection

Mixing It *Saturdays* 10:45-11:30pm Eclectic mix of new music, and discourse from Robert Sandil and Mark Russell. Includes Thelonic Time-out season (11 March)

Jazz On 3 *Sundays* 11:30pm-1am Modern jazz recorded in session and concert. This month: Norma Winstone (4 March), Sco. Hqs. La. Po. (11), Nguyen Lu's Sand Trio (18), Billy Jarman's Suburbs (25)

Regional

BBC Derby 94.2/95.3/104.5 FM, 1116 MW

Soundscape *Sundays* 3-6pm Ashley Franklin plays instrumental electronica, contemporary classical systems music, New Age and Ambient

BBC Greater London Radio (GLR) 94.9 FM

Destruction *In electronics* 8-10:30pm Ross Allen spins a motley, morphing selection of new music, from spacey jazz and minimalism to electronica and leftfield pop

Charlie Gillett *Sundays* 7-9pm Rock, roots, dub, World Music, blues, R&B and more sounds of the city

BBC Langshire 95.5/103.9/104.5 FM, 695 MW

On The Wire *Sundays* 12-2am Steve Barker's trippy mix of dub, experimental electronica, old rock, free jazz, World Music, and beyond

BBC Merseyside 95.4 FM, 1465 MW

The Late World Note *Sundays* midnite-2am Roger Hill's mix of avant rock, psychedelia, warped Ambient, and global gems in themed sequences

BBC Scotland 92.4-94.1 FM

From Bech To HipHop *Wednesdays* 8-9pm David Sillars drops jazz and new beats

Beat Patrol *Sundays* 8-9pm Peter Azon plays independent music across the spectrum

Electronica *Sundays* 9-10pm Marc Perrow airs the latest Techno and dance tracks

Cable Radio 99.8 FM (Gillian Keynes)

The Garden Of Ecstasy Delphs *Fridays* 10pm-midnight Shane Quentyn's blend of avant rock to electronic eclectics, and bizarre soundscapes

Kiss 100 FM (London)

Patrick Fuge *Sundays* 10pm-midnight Eclectic jazz-not-jazz mix

Frost and Hyde *Sundays/Monday* midnite-2am Motie breakfast that's chills the most

Signpost & Friends *Thursdays* 2-4am Jazz, Jungle, cyber-soul breakfasts and electrified grooves from this lively bunch

Colin Dale *Wednesdays* 2-4am Minimal Techno and concrete house

Sun 101 FM (Brighton)

Totally Wired *Daily* 11pm-1am Eclectic selection of leftfield independent dance tunes, laced with 60s/70s funkbacks

The Chill Factor *Sundays* 9-10am Chris Caslake's continuous mix of drum 'n' bass, dub, HipHop, classical, electronica and more

Links to WIR radio broadcasts can be found on The Wire Website: www.thewire.co.uk/the-wire

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Terre Thaemlitz's heroes become zeroes after a mid-air collision with American nerds Cheap Trick

Oh didn't I, didn't I, didn't I see you cryin'? Feelin' all alone without a friend, you know you feel like dyin'! — Cheap Trick, "I Want You To Want Me"

It was the summer of 1979, somewhere in an East Coast airport, and I was on the final leg of an elementary school tour of Washington DC (not as cool as the biannual school trip to Disneyworld, but educational enough to convince my parents it was worth going into debt over). Aside from being educational, the trip was also supposed to teach me positive socialisation skills, and both my parents and myself were hoping this time spent with classmates outside of the classroom would put an end to my five year run as King of the Nerds. I was to focus on things like "tiring in", "going along with the other kids", and "trying harder" — and if all else fails, just ignore them and they'll go away. Well, the end of my reign seemed plausible at the outset, but kids are clever and I didn't take long for my classmates to figure out that not letting me find a seat on a tour bus was not all that different from keeping me from sitting down on a school bus. Only now when I finally did get to sit down it was next to a dirty toilet. And getting pushed to the back of lines at museums and restaurants is kind of like getting pushed to the back of the school cafeteria line. Needless to say, these were all turns of events for which I was totally unprepared.

But the end of our journey was near. Me and the rest of the fifth graders sat impatiently awaiting a connecting flight home, when suddenly one of the 'n' kids screamed, "It's Cheap Trick!" I did not own a Cheap Trick record per se, but I had seen the television commercial for the *At Budokan* LP, and I had heard the refrain of "I Want You To Want Me" enough to get caught up in the hype. Besides, lead singer Robin Zander did look like a less showy version of another rock 'n' roll starlet I was infatuated with, Tommy Shaw from Styx. But the real attraction was Rick Nielsen with his music note sweaters, piano key ties and dorky glasses. Here was a fellow geek who had not only infiltrated rock 'n' roll culture, but actually commanded attention and affection from the very kids who pounded on me daily. Perhaps there was hope for me yet! Little did I know that what I considered a chance for validation as a misfit would turn into a pivotal anti-rock moment.

Word quickly passed to my position at the back of the peanut gallery that Robin Zander was not with the rest of the group. This news was shortly followed by word that the other members would actually be sharing our flight. I recall the news immediately struck me as some sort of class struggle within the group, as though the superstar vocalist was off flying first class somewhere while his bandmates were stuck with a plane full of obnoxious elementary schoolkids from

Minnesota. I think this was my way of perceiving the remaining members as more approachable and of justifying my unworthy status inhabiting the same space as theirs. By the time I boarded the plane they were already seated with drinks in hand, which is when I actually caught my first glimpse of Rick. Much to my surprise, I saw that he and his bandmates were sharing their seats with two of the most popular girls in my class, Stacey and Trish. Stacey was a tom-girl and Mendota Elementary School's answer to Tammy Shaw. Needless to say, I had a huge crush on her. Trish, on the other hand, was a malicious power queen who, back in the first grade, never came through on her daily promises to show me her pens after I showed her mine. As I stumbled toward my seat through the haze of paedophilic auras emanating from Cheap Trick, I managed to snap off two pictures. "Yes, there is hope for me yet," I thought to myself with scheming eyes and a sweaty brow. "One day I, too, will be a rock 'n' roll guitarist — or whatever it is Rick does — and command the affections of those I admire while being amused by the butt-kissing of those I despise. Muah-ha-ha-ho-ho-ho-ho-ho-ho!"

Once in the air, my little bag of nuts (on-board snack, that is) in hand, I begged the flight attendant to have the group autograph my napkin. "Especially the guy with the musical sweater!" She said she would see what she could do, and headed off toward the front of the plane. I leaned steep into the aisle to try and catch a glimpse of the proceedings. As she handed them the napkin, they reflexively began penning autographs, when Rick asked, "Who are these for, anyway?" As the attendant pointed my way, I blushed and ducked, only to hear Rick snidely say, "What, that little nerd there?" In that moment of Rick's triumph of wit, the irony of such a statement coming from someone who based his career on a geek persona was apparently lost on both of us. Luckily, I had two classmates sitting with me to ensure the details of the event would live on in legend long after the flight had landed. When the flight attendant returned with my autographed napkin, I read through my blur of tears like a notarized certificate of inescapable otherness.

Rick's comments had two long-term effects on me. The first was turning me off the rock 'n' roll phenomenon and consolidating its association with dominant cultural forces of homogenisation and oppression (or, in the language of the day, "bulies"). I know rock 'n' roll was something associated with popularity and power, but it was at this moment when I firmly and finally concluded that power was targeted against me (remind me to tell you about the previous summer when I was beaten up by a gang of rockers because I owned a copy of Styx's *Reckless* Of Eight before they did, somehow defaming the group's image because I was such a nerd). Now that's the stuff new wave harlots are made of! The second of Rick's lessons, which has served me well with regard to drag (and gets truer with age), is that no matter how hard I may try to blend in with a particular crowd, I should never count on passing. □

Reflecting badly: Cheap Trick



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